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Interviewing God

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A Study in Spiritual Questing

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By
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DEDICATED TO MY CHILDREN

INTRODUCTION

NEARBY the house of friends, whose home has been my Jerusalem home for nearly forty years, is a little Mosque. At the hours of prayer, from one who has climbed away up the slender minaret, comes the sweetest sound that floats down to earth, putting to shame all clanging bells, the call to prayer. Such, first of all, is this little book, a muezzin call to prayer. The author has mounted far toward heaven and from the heights there comes floating down to us, in sweetest tones, the call to come into "The secret place of the Most High."

Not every book on prayer is truly devotional; this one is. It draws upon the philosophy of prayer, but it is a philosopher on his knees that we hear. It is at home in the psychology of prayer, but it is the psychology of a mystic who prays. Not since I first revelled in the devotions of Andrew Murray in, *With Christ in the School of Prayer,* has any book made me so prayerful.

Dr. Troupe's little book is also a picture gallery hung with beautiful paintings, each picture a story. If the book had no other and higher value, it would justify itself as a source of illustrations of experience in the prayer life.

The book, besides, is instructive. It is not easy to combine instruction with devotion, but addresses first given at a vesper service for young people, are now given to all who would pray, each address being a chapter. It is not severely theological, nor does one need fully to subscribe to all the shades of thought presented, but, remembering that prayer, deepest devotion, is essentially poetic, may yield to its call to prayer. It is written from the standpoint of a thoroughly evangelical faith and calls us to the fellowship of the inner circle of those who live the devout life.

M. G. Kyle.

President, Xenia Theological Seminary,
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

AFTER fifteen years of active service an earnest and sincere Gospel minister should be able to formulate the religious concepts that are fundamental to the Christian life, state them simply and clearly, and square them with the rapidly accumulating body of well established truth, so that they can be put into practise in daily life. This is exactly what is attempted in the following pages. No claim is made to treat the subject matter exhaustively nor to think ourselves through to an absolutely perfect system of religious thought. Religion is not an exact science and the findings of one man are bound to differ from the findings of another. But in a day of fearless thinking such as ours, an occasional clearing in the jungle is an excellent thing, where we may pause, get our bearings and determine upon a more intelligent effort to reach the trail.

Only one life to live! How can we best get hold of it? How can we accomplish the most with the energies and powers at our command? Life is a big thing. We cannot possibly grasp the whole of it in the few short years that are allotted to us. It is harder to handle than we thought. Our theories fail and yet we do not know just wherein the difficulties lie. What is vital? What is essential? In short, life is the great adventure and it is our endeavour to set forth the eternal truth that the Christian life is the normal life for man.

It assures the greatest possible satisfaction to the greatest number. It enables each individual to find his place in the Creator's all-inclusive plan, where he can be the greatest possible benefit to himself and others.

This volume has grown out of thoughts which were first presented as Vesper-Service addresses at the Presbyterian Young People's Summer Conference at Arcadia, Mo., August 5 to 12, 1929. J. F. T.

Giddings Presbyterian Church,
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The Author wishes gratefully to acknowledge the help afforded by the quotations used in this volume. They have reached him from various sources. In some cases the authors are unknown. He is especially indebted to Professor Edwin H. Byington for his aid rendered in the history of worship. He acknowledges his indebtedness to other sources as well.

I

THROUGH THE JUNGLE

THIS is an age of unprecedented adventure. Never before in the history of man have so many people sought to explore new fields. The spirit of conquest stirs the breast of every normal youth. The aeroplane, the radio, the discoveries in the chemical laboratory, challenge the red-blooded manhood and womanhood of the world as never before. All our educational institutions are overcrowded by seekers after practical knowledge. Wherever there is a line of human interest there are many in hot pursuit. Religion has not escaped, because people are learning that true religion is practical.

Our age could scarcely be characterised as an overly religious age, and yet it is deeply interested in religious things. A religious play like Channing Pollock's "The Fool," crowds the theatre; religious controversy fills many columns of the daily press and is widely read; religious novels like Hugh Walpole's "The Cathedral"; Harold Bell Wright's "God and the Groceryman"; Kauffman's "Man of Little Faith" and Oliver's "Victim and Victor," have a wide sale; Bruce Barton's "The Children of God"; the books of Principal L. P. Jacks and Harry Emerson Fosdick have a new vogue. People are reading and thinking about religious things. The interest in religion is unmistakable and is one of the most hopeful signs of the times. Men usually find fault with a thing first, study it afterwards, and finally embrace it. If this rule will apply now we should be on the eve of a great religious awakening.

But this is in a marked degree a critical age. Nothing can escape the inquiring minds of modern youth. Government, economics, society and religion—all must pass beneath the scrutinising eye of modern thought. That which stands the test is honoured, and that which fails is discarded.

Christianity, like everything else, has felt this criticism keenly and it has led us, as some are inclined to think, into the midst of an impenetrable jungle, from which wilderness of opposing views the majority will never be extricated. Others think that it will lead to the total destruction of all of the creeds of the Churches. But to those who know the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, it is a welcome portent of a greater and firmer faith.

The Christian religion has nothing to fear from historic or scientific criticism. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Christianity welcomes criticism as the handmaid of truth. She only asks that it be honest and constructive. Destructive criticism is a false criticism, blighting everything it touches. Nearly two centuries ago Bishop Butler wrote "The Analogy of Religion," as an answer to the sweeping claims of the destructive criticism of his day. The battle of half a century ago was waged between physical science and religion. It was a conflict between Deism and Christian Theism. Matthew Arnold dismissed the miraculous as set forth in the Bible as "a figment of fancy." Renan and Straus in their "Lives of Jesus," left little of Christianity unscathed when they had finished. But when the battle was over and the smoke had cleared, Jesus Christ and His religion had emerged in a new splendour as the world's greatest truth.

Several things of outstanding significance were learned as the outcome of that historic struggle. Physical science had found its sphere and that sphere was not religion. Likewise, religion had found its sphere, and that sphere was not science. The Bible as a fetish of worship was destroyed; and the Bible, as the Word of God, containing all things necessary for the salvation of man, was established. "In the beginning, God," as the age-old challenge of religion, remained unshaken. The Divine Personality, the perfect, sinless, vicarious life and death of Jesus Christ shone forth in greater glory, and it is astonishing to note the almost universal tribute of criticism to the Christ of the Gospels. Professor Schmiedel, a hostile critic, finds in the sayings of Jesus, "nine foundation pillars which are beyond the faintest doubt," and exclaims, "I knew He was the divine character He claimed to be." Professor Weinel says, "No age has so occupied itself with Him, nor has so endeavoured to recall the features of His career and apply His teachings to the solution of social questions." Thirty years ago, Andre Lefevre declared, "All the philosophers from Descartes to Rousseau are Christian somewhere, and even Voltaire himself has not escaped the virus." Warshauer proclaims, "He is the religion which He taught, and while the race of man endures, men will turn to the crucified Son of God, not with a grudging, 'Thou has conquered, O Galilæan, but with a joyful, grateful cry, 'My Lord and my God!'."

That struggle with science and philosophy is closed.

If, in it, the Church of Christ lost some of her unwarranted tradition, she lost none of her Christ. He stands out peerless, acknowledged and honoured as the central truth of Christianity. His sinless life remains the sublime miracle of the ages. His Divine Personality is still the wonderment of all who behold Him. His complete Sonship with God is the only explanation that can satisfy the minds of men. His plan of redemption is the only way back to the Father's house. No need of further proof. He proves Himself. There are some who may find it hard to believe it all. There are none who find it hard to honour and admire the Christ.

But the problems involved are so profound and far-reaching that the debate will begin anew, in each new and young mind and for every generation. Small problems can be solved easily and little persons easily portrayed. Rembrandt can throw a frame around the noble Burgomaster; Harpigni can force the oak into a little canvas, and Turner tow the "Temeraire" to her last berth. But there are some scenes too vast to have any frame thrown about the picture. The poet stands in the midst of an autumn day, the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, close bosom friend of the maturing sun. The whole land for three thousand miles is waving with flowers on vast prairies—flowers of blue and gold and crimson, thousands and thousands of square miles are waving with ripening wheat and rye and barley; the hills are red with the glow of ripening foods; vast forests are climbing up the sides of the mountains, all glorious with colour. Husbandmen are in the vineyards, harvesters are around the stacks and shocks; the whole atmosphere is spiced, redolent and moist with billions of treasure. Describe the summer? Let the orator put his finger upon his lips and the poet drop his pen in despair!

How futile the attempt of the astronomer to describe the sudden doubling of that distant star! Did two planets rush together like two locomotives and in the collision start a conflagration? What means this new photograph of the sky on a recent night, when suddenly some asteroid exploded, sending a flame of light like a broad ribbon from the zenith down to the horizon, that broad flame being one-eightieth of the diameter of the whole sky? He leadeth the stars forth by regiments and calleth them all by name. These are some of the whisperings of His power; His full thunder, what man can understand?

The Eskimo looks at a little dwarf maple growing under the lee of an iceberg. The little dwarf is scarcely six inches in height. But sailing into one of our harbours with Peary, what conception did that poor Arctic Indian have of our flaming maples and oaks and elms, leaping a hundred feet in the air? On our western prairies we are accustomed to see wild flowers and grasses two feet in height, but what do we know about vegetation in contrast with Stanley's journey through tropical Africa, where the wild flowers of every colour and perfume bloomed higher than a man's head, and where the profusion of perfumed growths clogged his wagon wheels? In our zone, with six months of chill, we see vegetation, as it were, through a glass darkly.

At best, scholars, travellers, and scientists are like children, who find a little jewelled cup lying upon the shore of a sea, whose sands flash with pearls and diamonds. We know only in part the little world of minerals and vegetables and men round about us. Let us hasten to confess that these great themes are related to the Creator, who stands behind the stars, and that Divine Figure, Who once walked up and down the hills of Galilee, and was to fisherman at once teacher, guide and brother; Who was to peasants, physician, deliverer; Who was to children and to publicans, medicine for wounds and remedy for all that was wrong, guide to that which was right; Who was for all a brother, tempted and tested in all points and in every faculty. He knows man's troubles, his sorrows, his yearnings, his wild regrets, his longings for immortality.

Artists have studied Jesus from opposing angles. Guido Reni painted Jesus from the viewpoint of His humiliation, with crown of thorns and drops of bloody sweat. Munkacsky conceived of Jesus always as in His Gethsemane, or in the piteous tragedy of His trial and the cross. But Raphael and many modern artists love to think of Jesus in His luminous moods, His hours of transfiguration, His glorious beauty. Innumerable poets have set themselves to the task of describing the strong Son of God and His immortal love. Now bring all the ideal portraits together and they are as nothing over against an illimitable ocean. It is as a tiny little chapter on astronomy over against a Milky Way, sown with cosmic systems so distant, with light travelling for thousands of years before it reaches our eyes. It is as one blade of grass against Livingstone's continent of tropic treasure; as a single leaf against thousands of miles of forests; as a candle flame over against a summer-making sun.

The rationalists, Straus and Renan, and a thousand others, also Farrar, Keim, Andrews and Beecher, and a thousand more, all alike confessed, when they had completed the last page of their biography of Jesus of Nazareth, "His life will never be written." In His gentle, friendly talks to the multitudes gathered around Him, all the flowers bloomed, all the fruits ripened, and all the birds sang. In His temptations, struggles and reforms, all the battles of life were fought upon that frontier line as He struggled unto blood—battles whose missiles are thoughts, and ambitions and whose wounds enfeeble the will, and whose gash is in the heart. In His friendship with fishermen and ploughboys and children of the humble cottages, every form of gentle joy unfolds and happiness rises into all faces, as golden clouds rise slowly upon the surface of the sea to float home toward the sun.

And remembering the life that He lived, the loveliness of His radiant face, the gentleness of His speech, the atmosphere of reserve power and strength that He carried, His victory over all the besetments of poverty, squalor and hate; that indefinable majesty that was in His person, so that sometimes His enemies fell upon their faces before Him—ah! what a revelation of the imperfection of life He brought to even the best of us and the noblest. Recent measurements of the Alhambra and the cathedral in Seville reveal the fact that the proportions are faulty, the columns imperfect and the sides unequal. Tested by the flawless accuracy of St. Peter's or Amiens, those Moorish architects seem like bungling amateurs. So too, after Jesus came; the highest ideals of Moses and David and Joshua, with their crudities, their broken plans, and their ignoble deeds, seem like strained, cracked, fragmentary statues, over against the loveliness of the life of Jesus Christ Himself.

It is a truism that Darwin's discovery of seeds developing into trees rewrote every scientific book in the libraries, just as Columbus' discovery of America sent every geography and map to the waste heap and rewrote every geography. Not otherwise, Jesus, Son of man, Son of God; the Way for the thinking of lost men; the Light falling upon that Way; the Vine planted beside the path; the Friend and Companion of the long journey; the Comforter for the wounded pilgrims; the Physician; the Teacher for little children, tired of the dust and the heat; the Shadow of the Great Rock amidst the heat; the Door at the end of the Way—define Him? Describe Him? Analyse Him? Thou silly child! Put thy finger upon thy lips, take thy shoes from off thy feet! The whole earth is now holy ground.

Consider the folly of ever expecting absolute agreement of creeds, or statements as to the nature of this Divine Teacher. Every-day scientists realise more the importance of the personal equation. In preparing for an eclipse, the instrument that marks the passing of the shadow over the face of the sun has to be tested for the reason that one astronomer's eye reports swiftly, while another's eye reports slowly and the difference must be accounted for and the machine adjusted in advance. The big words of life, such as honour, justice, injustice, mean different things to different men. What is black to one may not be white to another, but it may be greyish. Some there are who think more about definitions than the things described.

There are many teachers and preachers who do not teach Jesus and love Him, but who teach about Jesus.

Imagine the head of that Red Cross steamer that landed in Japan after the great earthquake a few years ago, going ashore to stand before thousands of homeless and starving people to lecture to them about the chemical constituents of flour, and milk and meat! Suppose this man should begin on the first day by saying: "Now, my dear starving friends, let us begin by carefully analysing the different foods that generous friends from the United States of America have sent to you. This morning I will speak to you about the phosphates that make wheat edible and nutritious. This evening I will lecture on the food elements in milk and meat." And suppose this man should continue these analytical lectures for three or four days, only to discover that most of his audience had died of starvation! What the starving people shout is: "Bread! Give us bread!"

What, analyse your dearest friend? After being absent for some time from home you receive a telegram that your mother is at the point of death. Taking the train you hurry back to the old homestead. The sight from afar of the old home, the shade trees, the garden behind the house, the little stream across the road, brings the lump to your throat. You enter the house. You expect to hear your mother's voice. But lo! now you are greeted by a strange voice, for your mother, for the first time has lips that are dumb. And what if the physician standing at the threshold, proposes a lecture on the muscular system of your mother; the bone framework, the circulatory system, the nervous system? How indignant your revolt! How swiftly you wave aside this analytical study! Oh, for one look into your mother's face! For one word of welcome from her lips! In that moment the intellect is nothing. The heart sits on the throne. Sentiment holds the sceptre, affections rule. Likewise do men in hours of grievous trouble revolt from philosophical abstractions. Every human being, sooner or later, cries out for God, for the living God. The little child whispers, "Is there not something for me?" And the story of One who at twelve years of age was about His Father's business, is the answer. The poor man, the publican and sinner are drawn as by an irresistible fascination, and there is something in Him for them. The old and the young, the high and also the obscure, those who have gained love, and those who have thrown love away, those who seek love, and those who find it and lose it again, those who long for peace only to be discrowned even though they are the natural and the enthroned kings; all, all alike, the falling statesman, the dying mother, the little child, all find in Him that which they need. And so at last come the paths that lead to happiness and peace.

Jesus' thought of the world was revolutionary and most amazing. No wonder so many people are at first startled. He held that the world is the Father's house and therefore a good world. Men like John Stuart Mill never tire of talking about the cruelty of nature, where the winter chills men and the summer burns them, the water drowns them, stones crush them, rust and mildew blight man's crops, tornadoes uproot his orchards and destroy his cities. Pessimists declare that if this is not the worst possible world, it is so bad that the explanation must be found in the fact that there is some evil force which, from time to time, breaks loose to go on a plundering expedition. But Jesus declares with sublime confidence, that God is our Father. He clothes the grass of the field and notes the sparrow's fall. He cares for his children. He makes suffering to become educatory, and troubles to be loads that develop strength. He teaches that God cares for his children and is doing the best that can possibly be done, considering every interest, and that when a sufficient time has passed men will find out that never once has the cord that binds man to the throne of God been broken. Oh, it is a great thing to believe that! It enables even weak men to do exploits and work miracles of progress and happiness for their fellow-men. We have not made enough of the intellect and genius of Jesus in modern times. He reduces every other thinker to mediocrity and every optimistic volume written has been based upon Jesus' sublime and unshakable assurance that ours is the best possible world, cared for by a good and all-loving God.

Jesus brought another revolutionary doctrine into the world, namely, that God is a God who forgives transgression and sin. Here He antagonises many teachers. Socrates said that he did not know that God had any right to forgive sin and that every transgression must, in a world of law, work out its own effect, and that the processes of nature are normal, natural, and in the interest of progress. Æschylus and Sophocles held that the effect called retribution was logically involved in every cause called transgression. Plato held that the evil man must walk up marble steps, heated red hot, until the sin was burned out of his soul. Euripides and Cicero alike believed that Nemesis is strong as death and cruel as the grave, and that forgiveness is a will o' the wisp dream of weak and wicked men who are afraid to accept the consequences of their own deeds. Modern behaviourists and other skeptics hold that God does not forgive sin, because sin is a fiction, a figment of the imagination, and that we are not responsible for what we are and do. Over against this, Jesus held that sin is a terrible reality, undoing men's lives, undermining their happiness, and that God is a loving Father who simply forgives the penitent. Just as the true father or mother recognises the wrong committed by the child, yet pities, pardons, heals, forgives, forgets, so God forgives his children.

What man but recalls some lie, some evil deed committed when a boy, that kept his eyes open and his mind troubled through the long night, and blessed, thrice blessed the hour when he goes forth to pour out his penitence and have the tale out in his mother's arms, to come back with the mother's words, "Now we won't say any more about it! It is all forgiven and forgotten and ended." And then the mother begins to revive some pleasure and with gentle hands wipes away all tears, until the little child sleeps and forgets and smiles in happy dreams and awakens to find that the storm and the lightning have burned the poison out of the air and sweetened every breath. That is what makes Jesus' teaching the spring of all progress. Today His Kingdom is in its youth. The old recedes, the new ever increasingly unrolls. His great ideas are like steeds of the sun, hurling forth His chariots. Soil is becoming flowers, flowers are developing into fruits, life is being transmuted into genius; savages are becoming sages, scholars are taking on the beauty of saints and as some one has said, "the present is God's chariot and we may be sure that he holds in his hands the reins of the future." The very simplicity of this program of Jesus often bewilders men who have the false notion that to be great one must be gaudy.

II

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MAZE

POSSIBLY the greatest confusion which confronts the thinking youth of today is the great maze of psychological theories which seem to begin everywhere and end nowhere. Until a decade or two ago psychology was regarded as a harmless breeze blowing through academic halls. It has now become a terrific cyclone turning all departments of life upside down and it is not at all easy to say whether this movement has come to bless or to curse. That will depend very largely upon how it is interpreted and how it is used. As this psychological storm has advanced it has divided into many divergent currents; a popular current, which is more or less religious; a scientific current, which is more or less naturalistic; a practical current, which has penetrated into many forms of business life; and an educational current, creating nothing short of a revolution in this susceptible body of theory and practise. Schools, classes and cults representing these various phases of psychology have sprung up very rapidly; books and periodicals have multiplied, and various kinds of propaganda have appeared over night. One set of these ideas 'dams up' other sets, until the student is totally lost in a wilderness of entangling, contradictory theories about God, the world, and his own existence.

Because of its intensive concentration upon physiological factors on the one hand and upon practical results, which terminate with health and prosperity on the other hand, present day psychology is seriously lowering the spiritual values of life. The supreme interest and worth of the individual self, which has been one of the central convictions of Christianity, caught from the mind of Jesus, has been challenged by the new psychology. It asks the question: Is the individual after all of any particular worth, in a universe in which he seems to have been reduced to cosmic insignificance, with all his boasted higher faculties traced to his simian ancestry and retaining still many of their original characteristics? Heretofore the noblest and highest of human thinking and living has been based upon the principle of the worth of the individual. It has animated our literature, our art, our preaching and, to some extent at least, our practical living. We are now confronted by developments in the field of psychology which seem to give the lie to much, if not to all, of that body of philosophy, ethics and religion upon which a working and a sustaining theory of life has been built.

The naturalistic character of this so-called *new psychology* is one of its most evident features. It is so very easy to allow a scientific study of mental activity to take the humanness out of humanity, the personality out of persons, and the spirit out of the universe, leaving men mere mechanisms, the products of natural forces. The progress of this new naturalism has been both rapid and sinister. It is working havoc, not only to personal character and ideals, but it is also turning many against science itself. For what profit can science be to the race if it materalises men and robs life of its noblest ideals? If science has come to dehumanise humanity, we may well wish ourselves back in superstition, rather than to become the victims of a learning which, like a storm, sweeps over us only to destroy and blow us away. Naturalism, however, is not science; it is only a false deduction from natural science and the so-called new psychology is little more than an extensive recrudescence of the long exploded theories of materialism.

It is utterly impossible for a Christian to overlook the challenge which the selfless psychology flings in the face of those who believe that personality is the central reality of existence. If one cares to understand the forces which are moulding and shaping present day thought, one must not overlook the influence of Professor John Dewey of Columbia University, New York City, whose books on philosophy and ethics, as well as on psychology, are being translated into many languages. In his Stanford University lectures, published in 1922, Professor Dewey finds the clew to the individual human being in the adjustment of his habits and impulses through the directing agency of intelligence, in which process the self disappears from sight. In his, "Human Nature and Conduct" (pp. 176, 177), he says, "The doctrine of a single, simple and indissoluble soul was the cause and the effect of failure to recognise that concrete habits are the means of knowledge and thought. . . . Now, it is dogmatically stated that no such conception of the seat, agent or vehicle will go psychologically at the present time. Concrete habits do all the perceiving, recognising, recalling, judging, conceiving and reasoning that is done. "Consciousness," whether as a stream, or as special sensations and images, expresses functions of habits, phenomena of their formation, operation, their interruption and reorganisation."

In the same volume (pp. 292, 293), Professor Dewey tells us that it is experience and not the self who experiences, which constitutes the primary and ultimate reality. He says, "Of course an individual is the bearer or carrier of experience," and then asks, "What is that?" To us it seems that that is a great deal. A tree is the bearer of life-sap. What is that? It may be all the difference between a sour apple and a sweet apple. A man is the bearer of experience. What is that? It may be all the difference between the sinner and the saint. Individualised experience means much in the realm of nature. It means infinitely more in humanity. The fact of experience itself is not nearly so important as the fact that the experience comes to consciousness and has meaning for an individual self. Human will also has no meaning for Professor Dewey, except that of a set of habits. In "Human Nature and Conduct," (p. 25), he says: "All habits are demands for certain kinds of activity; and they constitute the self. In any intelligible sense of the word will, they are will." Experience is therefore magnified at the expense of selfhood, which means, in the ultimate analysis, the nullification of experience itself. If we experience anything, we experience selfhood. That is the very centre of all experience, and each one of us has the power to shape his experience by means, not of thought only, but also of will.

The stress which is being laid upon the instincts in the new Psychology has almost wholly developed since the day of William James. Professor William McDougall is the leading exponent of this school. McDougall conceives man as a creature of instincts and no more. He is a soulless being, and the key to his nature is physical and not spiritual. There is no doubt but that there are powerful instincts present in the human organism. But is it not also true that these instincts can be transformed and that they are subordinate to other and greater forces which have entered the human organism to control if not to supersede the instincts? Humanisation transforms instinct. All of us know of instances where the fighting instinct has been sublimated and has taken the form of resistance to social and moral evil. We also can recall instances of persons in whom the instinct of curiosity, if it still lingers, has been sublimated and taken the form of scientific research.

The greatest defect of the psychology of instincts is the fact that it ignores motives. Motives are accepted incentives to conscious ends. They are not instincts, though they may involve instincts and emotions. Motives are intelligent, for there is always an end in view. An animal never has a motive, while man is never without one. An animal goes hunting in obedience to instinct. Man goes hunting because of a motive. It may be to satisfy his love of hunting or to secure food, or both. McDougall contends that man is controlled by instinct. A far more significant subject would be the control of instincts, in order that we may bring them into order and obedience to the moral will. This control calls for conscience and volition, both of which have no place in the psychology of instincts. Conscience is defined as "a false psychological assumption," and volition is called "only a more subtle and complex interplay of those impulses which actuate all animal behaviour . . . its fundamental impulse being self regard." McDougall's "Social Psychology" (pp. 8, 440, 442). Let it be emphasised that conscience, the rich and intricate inner life of man, is not a mere interplay of the animal instincts as the instinct psychology would have us believe. Conscience is the awareness of moral obligation. As the term itself indicates, conscience is "a knowing of the mind with itself." The problem which confronts us is not so much how to meet a situation expediently, as how to meet it morally and dutifully. If conscience is merely an instinct with no moral imperative back of it, then we might as well teach that anything is right that we can get away with. To live under the control of the instincts alone means living on the level of the lower animals. To live under the control of conscience means advancing to the level of the moral, the personal and the spiritual.

The latest and most formidable addition to the psychological menagerie is that *enfant terrible* behaviourism. Dr. Watson, who is the foremost champion of behaviourism says, "we must discard all reference to consciousness." In place of consciousness, he would put "conduct" in the sense of "behaviour." In his "Psychology From the Standpoint of a Behaviourist" (pp. 13, 14), Dr. Watson defines behaviour as "the separate systems of reaction that the individual makes to his environment," and these reactions he tells us "depend upon the total striped and unstriped muscular and glandular changes which follow upon a given stimulus." All our conduct, including thinking itself, consists in reaction to the muscular and glandular changes of the body. In other words, if I hold up a man on the street and take his money, it is because my muscles or glands are not functioning properly. If behaviourism is correct, every minister of the Gospel, every Sunday School teacher, and every moral welfare worker may just as well seek a new calling. Their services are no longer needed and in their place let the chemist and the cook come forth and prepare compounds that will contribute to the happiness and welfare of the race. The behaviourist fails to consider why we behave as we do. What makes the striped and unstriped muscles respond differently in different individuals? Why do different men respond differently to the same situation? Why does the same man respond differently to the same situation at different times? There can be no intelligent answer to these questions without considering the presence of motives, and of a self who has these motives. A prominent psychologist says: "Behaviourism is refuted the instant one begins the process of education, that is, to learn to behave intelligently." But in spite of the many refutations, this system of psychology is exercising a tremendous influence upon present day education.

Another factor to be conjured with in the field of psychology is that hectic and lopsided psychology known as Psychoanalysis, which carries with it a reckless and unsound system of ethics. Its founder, Sigmund Freud, is charged with unscientific exaggeration and lack of balance, yet psychoanalysis is widely practised. Freud attaches a sinister import to our common every-day errors, such as the forgetting of words and names, slips of the tongue, etc. He holds that the failure to recall names is enrapt in shameful implications, indicating all kinds of secret aversions operating under what he calls "the unpleasantness principle." A mistake in the use of words, or a lapse of memory, Freud attributes to the suppression of an intention or to the conflict of two intentions. For instance, if I momentarily falter in pronouncing a word which begins with the letter "W," he would argue that it is in all probability due to the fact that I have had some sinister relation with a woman or have possibly been secretly using whiskey quite frequently, both of which words begin with the letter "W" and, therefore, I unconsciously stumble over any word beginning with that letter. To attribute such errors to hidden sinister feelings seems to us to be both unjust and unscientific.

Psychoanalysis also greatly overemphasises the importance of the subconscious, and minimises the importance of the conscious mind. In "General Introduction to Psychoanalysis" (p. 7), Freud states that "the psychic processes are in themselves unconscious, and those which are conscious are merely isolated acts and parts of the total psychic life." He compares the system of the unconscious to a large antechamber in which the psychic impulses rub elbows with one another as separate beings. There opens out of this antechamber another, a smaller room, a sort of parlor, which consciousness occupies. But on the threshold, between the two rooms, there stands a watchman who passes upon the individual psychic impulses, censors them, and will not let them into the parlor if they do not meet his approval. This "censor" of which the psychoanalyst makes so much, is a kind of substitute for "conscience" only that it has lost all connection between right and wrong. Undoubtedly, in the realm of the unconscious or subconscious, there occur surges of appetite and instinct which eminate from our lower nature, but it seems to us that it is their admission into the realm of the conscious which matters most. Likewise, subconscious memories also exert an unwholesome influence upon our lives, but after all is it not the memories that thrust themselves persistently into consciousness and cannot be forgotten which disturb us most?

Another exaggeration of Freud is his obsession of the dominance of the sex instinct over life. He says it rules the life of childhood, youth, manhood, womanhood, dream life and even our laughter, and he robs it of any sense of sacredness or even romance. Every normal human being knows that while the sex instinct plays a large part in our life, it by no means dominates. We must grasp the full meaning of sex, in the light of its place in life as a whole, from its beginning in plant and animal life to its beautiful culmination in human life, where it becomes the expression of devotion and love. To miss this phase of sex life is inexcusable and shows evidence of a sordid mind. In "Introduction to Psychoanalysis" (p. 375), Freud gives us his estimate of the integrity of family life, which has been built up at infinite cost, and of social purity; "we have found it impossible to take the part of conventional morality or to estimate highly the way in which society has tried to regulate the problems of sexual life in its practise. We can prove mathematically that its code of ethics has exacted more sacrifices than it is worth, and that its procedure rests neither on veracity nor wisdom."

Is there any wonder, in the light of these views handed out by men supposed to be experts in their particular fields, that the average student questions seriously the worth and the sacredness of anything? Professor G. M. Stratten, of the University of California, in an article published in the Journal of Religion, January, 1923, says: "In a letter published not long ago it was said that the teaching of psychology in the universities should be prohibited. This is perhaps, an extreme position, at least in the eye of a psychologist. And yet there is a trend within the study which is a menace to the common good; a rebuke to the usual forms of aspiration. For in more than one instance its specialists have favoured a description and estimate of the mind, the very opposite of what is required, not merely by religion but by plain morals. The freedom of the person, the superiority of the mind to the body, the very existence of mind, not to use such favoured terms as soul or spirit—these, from the utterances of many in the profession, are doubtful or untrue. The gross effect for many students is to diminish, if not remove the ground for belief in moral responsibility and immortality, to erase the distinction of mind and body, to accentuate instinctive action and to elevate into dominance the sexual appetite."

Much of the so-called new psychology is thoroughgoing pessimism. It seems to be looking for man at his worst. It appears determined to, not identify man with the lower animal, but to make him lower than the animal. It is all too true that the world has in it many wretched, worthless human beings. The discovery of so many morons among us has come home to our generation with a terrible realism, yet out of all the wreckage of human society there has come, as gold from the furnace, such an overwhelmingly large number of worthy persons, "priceless in their purity and strength." The failures, after all, thank God, are away in the minority. If we are discouraged when we contemplate our own shortcomings and the deficiencies which we find in others, let us remember the very significant fact, which the new psychology seems to quite ignore—the power of the ideal, which is always with us wherever we go. The most significant fact about personality is not its present worth, but its possibilities. If the search for origins, into which maze psychological research leads us, deceives us into overlooking this fact, we have indeed sold our birthright for a very unsavoury mess of pottage.

If psychology reveals man to himself as a strange compound of contradictory qualities, which he does not know how to handle; as intelligent, and yet possessed of very limited powers; prudent and polite, yet very apt to blunder, especially when the least excited; firm, yet very yielding in his disposition; as daring and courageous but, at the same time, often very cowardly; upright and sincere, yet also very complaisant to men and therefore, very insincere, it is because psychology is not the remedy for man's ills. Right here is where the power of the Christian religion comes to the rescue. The greatest power in the world is Jesus Christ. The brows of men are furrowed, their countenances are sad, their shoulders are bent and their lives are haunted by failure because they do not avail themselves of the Christ-power; they do not call upon Him as they may, they do not appropriate Him as they might. Jesus Christ is the One Who can unravel the tangle of life and lead us out of the maze of the jungle.

Dr. Gordon gives us a beautiful illustration of the power of Christ in relation to the mysterious and entangling experiences of life: "In the palace of Justice in Rome," he says, "there is a remarkable chamber where visitors are sometimes taken. The remarkable thing about it is the decorations. The ceiling and the walls and even the floor, are covered with strangely painted frescoes. They seem strange when one enters. They seem grotesque. They do not harmonise. They are out of touch with one another and make a bewildering maze of confusion. But, there is one spot in the chamber, just one spot upon the floor, where, if you stand, everything falls into place. To most of us life seems a good deal like that Roman chamber; things seem out of harmony—sin, pain, unsatisfied longings, broken plans, unrealised dreams and blighted hopes. But there is one spot, a central spot, just one, where everything falls into harmony. Stand with Jesus—by His side—He sweetens life, straightens out the crooked parts of the road, and leads us on steadily to victory and to peace." Jesus alone is the One Who will lead us safely through the jungle and the maze of life's bewildering experiences. Jesus Christ alone is the One Who will enable youth to find itself and achieve its divinely appointed destiny.

III

FINDING THE TRAIL

ONE day a poor working-man, heavy with sorrow, without a job, embittered by the hunger of his own children at home, stood on the edge of the crowd, listening to Jesus. Hunger and cold, grief and shame, made him well-nigh desperate. For weeks he had been idle. His wife and children were down to one meal a day. Famine was abroad. Death was reaping a wide harvest through starvation. On the previous day this peasant saw a man carry a wooden box on his shoulder. "Of what did the man die?" he asked. The answer was, "of hunger." Day after day he had tramped the streets of Jerusalem seeking work, and now his feet were bare, his clothes rags, his face gaunt, his heart broken and his family in despair. When night fell the multitudes went away and having no food to take home, the poor, hungry, despairing workman sat down to think about Jesus and what he had heard Him say that day.

"He too is a carpenter," he argued with himself, "and all His life has pushed the plane and pulled the saw and lifted the hammer. I saw His hands—they were cracked and seamed hands. His nails were all broken and His feet blistered. Perhaps He has known days when He was out of work, when every day His clothes were a little thinner and His face a little more peaked, and His strength a little less, and His family—were they ever bitter toward Him, and ashamed? Did He ever hear a little child cry for food, and did He ever think that it might be a duty for a poor man to steal bread for his children, though a crime for those who were rich? It is the children that hurts! Like seven tender blossoms hanging upon a bough, are my seven little lives, these creatures of God, henceforth without support or guide or asylum! And how I have longed to give them a chance! A thousand times I have told them that I would give them a chance to learn and climb and find themselves. Once I used to laugh. The very soul of my wife has withered slowly but fatally. Now this Carpenter has come. I heard Him today. He seems to have changed things. Think of it! The Teacher Who brings good news to the working-man! Is it because the working people are in the majority? Is it because He thinks that the children of the poor of today will become the leaders of tomorrow? Evil men say He wants to organise us as soldiers for a revolution. That cannot be. There is no hate in His eyes. There is no war in His plan. Sometimes when He stands in the light He seems more like God than a man. What a lump was that in my throat when He said that 'He was moved with compassion because we were as sheep without a shepherd!' Whence has this Carpenter all these things that I have not? I do not know. All I can say is that He has brought to me my first ray of light, my first glimpse of a trail through the jungle. Henceforth I am for Him. I will follow Him through earth and sky and sea."

On the outskirts of a crowd that was hanging breathlessly upon the words of Jesus stood Nicodemus. He was a patrician, a land and office-holder. His note was the note of exclusiveness. He hated the "vulgar herd." He drew his garments aside lest the poor touch him. The very cattle and sheep of the fields seemed less repulsive than the crowds, with their dirt and rags and blindness, their bad teeth, their fetid atmosphere. Contact with them was physical pollution. He belonged to the inner circle of patricians who ruled the city and controlled the finances of the gorgeous temple. Drawing a fold of his robe across his face lest recognition bring disgrace, he strained his hearing lest he miss one word of the Teacher. From the first he recognised in Him a master intellect. At last here was a man who could think and who knew. Often the rabbis had irritated him with their dry-as-dust comments, but this young Carpenter skilfully handled the greatest problems, problems that were wholly beyond any analytical mind that Nicodemus had ever met. How cold the philosophy of Hillel, with his notion that a man had better be unborn than untaught, and who held that all that a convict, a thief, a murderer needed, was twenty-four lessons in philosophy. (Was he the father of the modern behaviourists?)

Nicodemus was the head of the Temple ring, who would not allow the poor to sacrifice a lamb or a dove that had not been bought from this group at a double price. Now the very thought of his graft and secret commissions filled him with utter disgust. There were moments when he could have spat upon himself. The gorgeous temple, with its slain lambs and its blood of goats, with the incense rising in the air, the chanting priests, the sham and the hypocrisy, filled him with such revulsion that he could have cried aloud. With his face hidden behind his cloak, Nicodemus fell into a soliloquy: "Well, this Carpenter is a real man," he mused. "He knows the difference between truth and sham. He calls things by their right names—Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, serpents, white sepulchres! A thousand pities that it is true! How I would like to sit down tonight and talk with this Carpenter about the future life! I wonder if He thinks as did the great Greek Plato, that a bad man must climb up marble steps, heated red hot in order to burn the sin out of his soul? Then the midnight hours; I tremble at the thought of death. But His words, 'Ye may be born again' seem sweeter than the sound of distant bells. How terrible that word that He spoke today about the fig tree that bore nothing but leaves upon which the axe would soon be lifted! Oh, that fruitless tree! No figs, but many leaves. That vine that was nothing but dead wood because it had no clusters of grapes! How I hate my hollow offices, my empty words! I wonder if a man can be born again in his heart? I wonder if a barren November can go back to promising May and the boughs put on fragrant blossoms? I wonder if this young Carpenter can end my restlessness? If it were not so selfish I would push these poor people aside, but He has at least taught me to see that their need is even greater than mine. No, I will wait until dark! When the night comes and everyone else has gone I will seek Him out. I will find out whether He can show me the trail." That very night this patrician found Him who said, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest," fell on his knees and found rest and peace.

Lost in the multitude and quite overlooked by others, stood an anarchist, his lips curled with scorn, his face twisted with cynicism, his cheeks purple with anger. So jealous was he of the rich robes of Nicodemus, the ruler, that, unconsciously, he muttered to himself as his heart poured forth passion like red-hot lava: "How I hate those rich hypocrites! By force and theft have they won their great homes. And now, by force and theft let the poor and despairing seize again what their hands first produced! What stupid beasts these leaders are! Blind leaders of the blind! Why the very ground is vibrating with the feet of coming changes. Soon the grass will be wet with fresh red blood. What the strong wrested away by brute strength, they shall lose through greater strength made desperate by want and starvation. So long as the people are sheep and the privileged people are wolves, these corrupt leaders can gain their ends. But where a lamb once was, a stag now stands, driven to bay, and the horns of the stag are against the teeth of the wolf. Sooner or later the wolf will go down."

"Strange that the people are so silly! Passing strange that the multitudes are the slaves of the leaders! And these leaders, slaves of their chiefs, and these chiefs slaves of a conscienceless monster, with two heads, one ecclesiastical and the other political! The upper group forge chains with which the people bind themselves and on each link is carved the word 'Liberty.' Slowly the binding goes on. The schemer comes to his dupe and says, 'Your right hand is free, fasten it quick! Your head still turns—come, fix it in this place! Your eyes still look out upon beauty—tighten the bandages! Your ears still hear overtures of happiness—stuff this wax into them! Now you cannot move. How orderly you are, how secure, how beautiful everything is—for a few of us!' Strange that any one can be happy in such a world! Nothing above us but stars and they are dumb. Nothing beneath our feet but graves and they are silent. Nothing around us but the atmosphere, made foul by the gluttonous over-lords. And, since there is no future beyond this blind waste of desert land, let us act. What if our action does end in blood? We have been hounded all the days of our lives. Let us destroy, and still destroy!" Then suddenly something in the anarchist gave way. His chin dropped upon his breast as the Carpenter-Teacher went on with His words, "Ye have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. . . . Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father Who is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." In that moment the fountains of the great deep were broken up in the anarchist. His eyes became little pools of water. And when the Master looked upon him he sank slowly to his knees, saying to himself, "His is the better way. He is not Mary's son. He is the Son of God."

A woman merging from the crowd said: "I know what I think of Him. He is a good man. We women know. There is no mud in the bottom of His eye. Bad men trample girls down as the swine tear up the snowdrop and the anemone with their tusks. The herds and flocks go through the wheat, trampling it into the dirt, so brutish men trample down women. But not this Carpenter. How gentle to the children! How beautiful His words, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me.' How kind to the woman with the sick child! How tenderly He treats His mother! How wonderful that He should have opened the little circle of friends and made room for us all when He said: 'Behold, these are My mothers and My sisters and My daughters.' This Teacher never struck a woman. He never wounded a little child. Let the men do what they will—we women know the difference between bread and husks, between a warming fire and a snowdrift. We know the difference between contempt and love. Some say that after a while He is to be made King by the men, and then women's fingers will weave purple and robes of gold for Him. Some say men are jealous, avaricious and full of envy, and that they will pull Him down and kill Him. If so, in that hour, we women will bury Him under frankincense and cover His tomb with our tears." What this woman said was fulfilled. When the golden Easter morn dawned, it was a woman who stood before the tomb waiting in the darkness, and unto a woman was He first of all revealed, to lead each Mary along the new and brighter trail.

In the surging multitudes stood an average man, listening and questioning. He belonged to what is called the common people—the middle class. He was not a ten talent man and knew he could never rank among the great. Nor was he a one talent man, for he was conscious of the fact that he had a better gift. He was a plain, ordinary two talent man, doing average work. But he was aware of the fact that the enthusiasm of his youth had died out. Life had become monotonous. Every day brought its drudgery. For twenty years life had been the same round and his task annoyed him. Oh, the treadmill career! He was deadly tired of it all. The very sight of men sickened him. What would he not have given for the old zest of life, and the noble rage for living, and the waking with joy in the morning as in the days of his youth! Weeks had passed since he had listened to the Carpenter-Teacher for the first time. He had stood very close to this great Master, and they had exchanged looks and he felt that Jesus had read him through and through, and realised the misery that was in his heart. What startled him was Jesus' exclamation, which must certainly have been addressed to him and him alone, "What shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life, or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"

Then this common man began to talk, "Can I ever forget that moment? Why, He made me feel that I was but a little lower than God, as He stretched His arms out toward me. It was as if He had uncovered a gold mine on the little plot of ground my father willed me, or, as if I had found diamond beds on the sandy hills that I thought had no worth. How great a thing He said kindness was! He said that he who gives a cup of cold water to one of His little ones has made God happy. I know that I am only a common average man, but He made me feel that I could be something great if I would give God a chance. I wonder if that is why I have wakened the past few mornings with so much happiness and hope? My family is talking about it. I wonder what they would say if they knew that it was this Carpenter who had lighted the torch that had fallen out of my hand and had gone out? How different He is from the rabbis! He has no scorn for the Roman and the Greek and the Egyptian who are here. He treats the tax gatherer or the ragged girl as one whom He delights to honour. The rulers may be jealous of Him, but we common people love Him. He belongs to us and we belong to Him." And the next time Hillel's son critised the Carpenter, Jesus, He had a new defender in an average man who said, "the common people hear Him gladly for He speaks as one who has authority and not as the scribes. He leads those who follow Him over the trail of new hope."

Gone the city of Jerusalem and the golden age for Galilee! The multitudes that once gathered on the seashore have dissolved, and the voice of the Master Musician is silent. Gone the rulers and soldiers, and priests and peasants! Gone too, the women and children. The twentieth century has come, and a new Western civilisation has risen. The little fishing boats of the Sea of Galilee have developed into the ocean going liners and the fearful submarines. Transportation by donkey-back has expanded into the automobile and the airship. Communication by messenger has enlarged into the telephone and the radio. But the fundamental need of man still remains the same. Amid the bewildering confusion of the mechanical developments of our highly materialistic age, men are still seeking the happy trail that may lead them to better things. And thrice blessed the man who finds that trail.

Some children are so fortunate as to pick up the trail in their own homes. They accept it much as they accept their parents, without going outside to find it. This is as it should be. "For to you is the promise and unto your children." There are others who are not so fortunate as to find the trail in their homes, but must go out in search of it. For such, if they are but able to recognise Him, the Christ still stands in the legislative halls, teaching men justice and truth. He still walks in the market place and in the temple. He lifts the scourge to drive out the money changers. He climbs the garret steps into the reeking tenements, and makes His way to jails, where most of the inmates are boys in their teens and often at midnight, in the dark streets, Jesus, bent upon His mission of recovery, goes walking where the daughters of beauty and the faded flowers wander. To all such He says, as He said to Peter, James and John, "Follow Me." This is the first and only requirement that Jesus has ever laid down for the Christian. He never asked a person to subscribe to a certain creed; to be initiated by baptism or submit to any other ceremony. All these things came at the end rather than the beginning. He did not even say to the hot-headed John and the impetuous Peter, "You must promise Me that you will not swear any more if you want to become My disciple." He simply said, "Follow Me." In other words, Christ admitted very imperfect people into the inner circle of His friendship, and by close contact and constant fellowship with Him they learned to become more and more like Him, until the unlovable John became John the beloved disciple, and the unstable Simon became the rock-like Peter, whose preaching saved multitudes on a single day.

The difference between a man who is a Christian and a man who is not, is the simple fact that the Christian wholly accepts Jesus Christ as his leader and the other does not. The question which confronts every individual is simply this: Do I accept Jesus Christ as a trustworthy religious guide, whom it is my sincere purpose to follow? If I do this, then I am a Christian. I have then become a scholar in the Christ school and henceforth I will endeavour to solve all the problems of my life in the light of His teaching. "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." The first disciples became His scholars in just this way. They went where He went, they listened to what He said. His life was for them an example, and as they slowly learned His teaching, they absorbed His Spirit, practising what He told them to do. The same process must be followed today. Jesus is no longer present with us in person as He was with the first disciples, but He is with us in Spirit. It was necessary for Him to go away in person in order that He might return in Spirit to be with all people the world over. "It is expedient for you that I go away," says Jesus. His visible Incarnation must of necessity be brief. Only a small circle could enjoy His actual presence, but a world-wide kingdom, like Christianity needed a risen Lord. So Christ went away in the body in order that He might return and be with us in the Spirit. He is also present with us in His teaching in the New Testament, where He stands out as an example of the principles which He proclaimed. He is likewise with us in the hours of worship, both private or public, and especially in the Church, where His presence is visualised. So, in these very important ways, we may follow Jesus today and learn of Him in His school.

We may not always be satisfied with the progress we are making in mastering the lessons of the Christian life, but there may be some comfort for us in the thought that after Jesus had been with His first disciples all through His earthly ministery, it was necessary for Him to say to them at the close of that ministry, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." The Master is exceedingly gracious and patient. He stands at the door and knocks, tarrying for His reluctant disciples, and in infinite grace waits for their mood of receptiveness, that He may return and impart His blessing. There is also comfort in the thought that, when we stumble and fall, we are not different from the stumbling and falling first disciples who, though they fell often, if they were sincere, rose again and were still His disciples. Thus we proceed on our strange pilgrimage, in quest of a country and a home "beyond the shadows and the wanderings."

IV

FORMING AN ACQUAINTANCE

THIS is, we are frequently reminded, an age of rapid and pervasive change. The material conditions, and with them, the economic, social, intellectual, even the moral structure of human life as it has long been known, are in a state of most bewildering flux. Nothing seems altogether fixed or stable. In the world of ideas hardly a principle that has been, for generations, thought of as established, but has had to meet with criticism, if it has not actually been denied. Humanly speaking, that which lies beyond this great unrest is the spirit of democracy. From the beginning of history till almost within our recollection the two dominant factors in most people's lives were authority and obedience. It was the habit of the average man in the average situation to do as he was told. Nor did this seem at all strange to him, since his associates and his forbears, in their turn, had quite unquestioningly done likewise. This was not merely a matter of action, but of thought as well. For generation after generation men were told by those who happened to be in authority, not only what they should do, but also what they should believe. Then, the intellectual honesty of such churchmen like Martin Luther and his fellow reformers, was forced into reluctant rebellion; political rebellion followed soon after.

Slowly, but gathering momentum like wildfire, the spirit of individualism swept over Western Europe, until it caught even in the remote American colonies. And here first in modern times, there was set up a nation, consciously committed to the principle that authority rests, not upon the divine right of kings, but upon the consent of the governed. So contagious was the American example that it has changed the whole social and political face of the world, so that today men everywhere demand the right to govern themselves and think for themselves.

This tremendous change has made, or will ultimately make, it necessary for human life to be recast from top to bottom. Nothing can remain quite as it was, for everything must be re-established upon the new basis of democracy. This does not mean that all that was worth while in the old ways of living will be lost. Indeed, all that was good will finally be kept or returned to. But the good old things will be retained for a new reason. In a great many ways we will still follow tradition, but no longer simply because it is tradition; it will be because it seems to men's impartial, reasonable judgment that it is worthy to be followed. This will be as true in religious matters as in others. Our religious concepts, as all others, must be re-examined, revalued and, in some cases, restated so as to meet the needs of a new age. Whatever else may be abandoned, the world must and will retain Christianity, but it will not be the Christianity of the autocratic ages. That which must come—and is indeed already coming—is a deeper, fuller, richer, and more reasonable faith, resting upon the fuller understanding and deeper appreciation of Jesus Christ, which is being brought about through education. Such a Christianity is even now in the process of development. It is not limited by the bonds of organisation but is found in men of all denominations. Yet the establishment of this new conception of Christianity is no easy task, as every forward looking minister of the Gospel realises. An explanation of the fundamentals of religion raises problems which cannot be solved without the most earnest effort and the utmost open-mindedness.

The first and great problem which the new conception of Christianity must face is the problem of God himself, since the chief aim of all religion is to set up a right relation between men and God. Until we have at least substantially agreed upon the nature of God, there can never be a real growth of religion, or a general acceptance of it by the world. God, the Creator of the universe, whose laws are its laws, and by whose life it lives—is He in any sense a person so that we can say, "Who is He?", or was creation but the work of an unknown, impersonal First Cause or Creative Energy? Who— or what— is God?

There is, of course, the prior question whether there is any God at all, but that is one on which we need not spend much time. People who can be satisfied to explain the universe by saying that, "it happened," or "just evolved," are hardly worth the arguing with. If we exclude all but the evidence of sense, then truly, the fact of God cannot be proved. But if the evidence of reason is considered, then it must be evident, at least, that all this universe did not come from nothing, for "from nothing, nothing comes." No one has ever yet seen an effect without a cause. So a First Cause has been and is the postulate of all reasonable thinking about the world.

There is one other, fundamental, simple principle necessary to our thinking. If "from nothing, nothing comes" it must likewise be true that the less cannot cause or generate the greater. If not from nothing, whence then could the added greatness come? We must therefore assume that everything in the wide range of human experience has or had a cause as great as, if not greater than the sum of all that has been, is, or can be. And, since there is no known limit to what can be, therefore the First Cause is itself without limit or infinite. Thus, the first rational conclusion from a study of the universe, is that there must be an infinite First Cause. Since the less cannot create the greater, the First Cause— or God— must be at least equal to the highest known form of existence. The highest form of material existence that we know of is the rather mysterious thing we know as force or energy. This, indeed, not only underlies, but constitutes all matter, for if matter is analysed it breaks up into elemental atoms which, in turn, resolve themselves into electrons, and these, the scientists define, as points of force. There is, however, a form of existence which is higher than material energy—which can modify, control and direct energy to its own purpose. This higher power is the soul or personality of man, operating through the activity of his will and intelligence. And the soul is not entirely amenable to any power outside of itself. Nothing controls it, that is not even more controlled by it. Therefore soul, or personality, is the highest known or conceivable form of being.

This being the case, and since once more, the less cannot be the creator of the greater, it must follow that the Creator of personality must Himself possess it—that God must be in some sense, a Person. Is it really conceivable that an unconscious force could create the conscious soul of man? God is a Person, and possessed of the essential attributes of personality, namely, active will and active intelligence. Or it may be said that he consists in will and intelligence united in activity. His essential nature is three-fold, yet he is not a trinity of persons, but a Trinity in a Person.

The next question is that of the moral character of God's will and intelligence. Here the answer lies in the simple fact that the moral sense exists in man, a being which he created. If man is or can be good, then God must be infinitely good. If man's thought can be true, God's must be infinitely so. Now, the essence of moral goodness is unselfish love. Then we may describe the will of God as Infinite Love and the intelligence of God as Infinite Wisdom. These two, with their unceasing joint activity for the ultimate well-being of all created things, make up the true and infinite Trinity: Love, the Father; Wisdom, born of Love, the Son; and the activity of both together, the Holy Spirit.

The conception of an all-powerful, infinite, wise and loving God, faces one real serious objection—the fact of the existence of the universe of moral evil. I say "moral evil," though, as a matter of fact, there is no other evil. Evil is not a physical, but a moral quality, and cannot be said to exist in physcial things. Material nature has no quality of good or evil; it is no more cruel than kind. All of its forces exist for useful ends, and all are useful when they are not misapplied. But in the spirit of man the quality of moral evil does exist and has expressed itself from the beginning in many ways. And there are many thoughtful people to whom this fact seems to cast a doubt on the existence of the kind of God Christianity has taught us to believe in. The problem of evil is incomparably the greatest problem religion has to deal with, but every other religion, as well as Christianity, faces the same problem. In the first place, while evil has a real existence in a practical sense, resulting in exposing the whole race of men to condemnation, and debasing the nature of the race, yet abstractly and philosophically it is unreal, because it is not eternal. Good only is eternal. Evil is not a thing, but a negation, not a quality, but the absence of a quality, i.e., goodness. We find an exact parallel in the case of physical cold. Experimentally and to sensation, cold exists; yet it is not a thing as heat is, but is the absence of heat. When an object has comparatively little heat, we call it cold, and the existence of cold has no bearing on heat, except as indicating that there are places or things to which heat has not as yet completely penetrated. So the existence of evil is no contradiction of the power of goodness. No It means simply that goodness has not yet completed all its work. Nor can the work be finished in the very nature of things, so long as new men and women are being continually created, for they must first be created before the operation of God's love can make them good.

Man was originally created good, but with the power to choose to be evil. He chose evil. This shows us that man is not merely a powerful automaton, going perpetually through the motions of goodness, in which case his acts would have no moral quality. Goodness implies essentially the element of choice, and of free choice. A good man is good because he could have been evil but he chose not to be so. Therefore, at least the theological possibility of evil is an essential to goodness and God could not have made man good without giving him the power of being evil if He so desired. Goodness itself, may even, through man's abuse of it, be turned into evil, just as heat can destroy as well as warm. Man alone is responsible for the moral evil in the universe.

Yet, some will ask, "But why could not God have made man different?" The answer is, to have made him different would have robbed him of the one gift which is higher than goodness, since it is the basis, not only of goodness, but of manhood as well, namely, freedom, which is God's choice gift to man. Freedom to be good and wise as He desires, and to grow more so to eternity, but freedom also to refuse all goodness and all wisdom. Freedom is not only God's choice gift to man, but it is the one thing which, in all His infinite relationships, He guards most closely. That is why He does not intervene to stop the evils and abuses of this world. That is the reason why He did not stop the Great War. If men are to be men, and not automata, they must be left, both individually and collectively, to make themselves the kind of world that they desire. If, in their madness, they desire to make themselves a little hell, God does nothing more than love and pity them.

God, as infinite Love and Wisdom, is by His very nature, absolutely and forever beyond our reach. Infinity—even in its lowest mathematical sense—is something which the finite mind can talk about, can postulate, but which it can never have a real and concrete understanding of. Does this mean that God, as He is in

Himself, can never really be known by man? It would but for the fact that He has chosen to reveal Himself to us through our Lord, Jesus Christ. This is exactly what John meant when he said, "No man hath seen God at any time." But John also said, "The only begotten Son, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." All God's infinite love and wisdom are forever made accessible to mankind through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Jesus Christ knew God, because He came from God. Having enrolled ourselves in the Christ school, and having accepted Him as our Teacher, we therefore go to Him with the question, "Can we know God?"

One Sunday morning one of the members of my church came to the morning worship, arm in arm, with a blind woman. She led the blind woman down the aisle to her pew. After the service of worship was over I saw her lead the blind woman up to another member of the church and taking the hand of the blind woman she placed it in the hand of the other and said, "I want you to meet my friend, Mrs. A." So Jesus takes our hand and places it in the hand of His heavenly Father and introduces us. We are in this world much like blind people. Jesus takes us by the hand, as it were, and says, "I want you to meet My Father—your Father—our Father." Then He continues, "Here is a beautiful world-house in which you live. Its ceiling is studded with wonderful bright stars, its floor is carpeted with lovely, fragrant flowers, beautifully clothed. Its walls are ornamented with verdant vines and trees bearing luscious fruit. All of this is My Father living in your presence. This world-house or universe in which you live, is My Father's physical body, through which He is trying to express His great love for you, through the infinite order and variety of beautiful things which He has created for your enjoyment. Behold, the birds of the air! Not one of them rises or falls without the notice of My Father in heaven. And how much more is He present in your life? Why, even the very hairs of your head He has numbered. He also lives in the hidden recesses of your life. You can speak to Him there. When you pray to Him say, Our Father, and whatsoever you ask of Him in My name He will give you."

Jesus also emphasises the fact that "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." God is "the Father of Spirits." Hence every created spirit is a child of God. If all spirits were not members of the family of God, it would be useless to try to teach them about God, for they could not understand. You cannot teach a horse the things of a man, because he has not the spirit of a man. Man has the capacity to grasp the things of God, when that capacity is aroused through Jesus Christ. God is the Father of all spirits, whether they be in heaven, on earth or in hell. Some are good, some are evil. Some are righteous, some are prodigal. But all spirits should be good, because all spirits are the children of God. Hence we see how wretched and deplorable a thing it is to be evil—for an evil man is an evil son of God. And since God is a good Father and a righteous Father, He will not be slack in discipline. The rebellious sons of God are not slow to make hell in this life, and dare we refuse to believe that they will make no more hell after death? But Jesus especially emphasises the Fatherhood of God in His love and care for us. The

Parable of the Prodigal Son is central in His teaching. Unfortunately, because of our keen sense of sin, and our constant need of comfort and encouragement, we have often missed the true message of this parable. Our hearts have laid hold of the sins and the sorrows of the wayward son and his return to the father, a sadder and a saner man. We call it the Parable of the Prodigal Son, when it is, in fact, the Parable of the Forgiving and Faithful Father.

Its first aim is not to tell us about the sins and faults of youth, but to tell us about God and to give us assurance of His eternal interest in mankind, His fidelity as a creator. It was given by Jesus to tell us that God, having created a race of beings in His own image—beings with physical bodies and animal propensities, yet having within them a spark from heaven, something that in the last resort, confronts them and recalls them from sin, something that is the source of all human grandeur and the basis of all human tragedy—will not fail them in their time of need. Its message is that God is a faithful Creator, because He is a loving Father. The God to Whom Jesus introduces us is as kind and sympathetic as Jesus Himself was as He went about during His earthly ministry, healing the sick, the lame, the blind, the dumb, and doing good in every way. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. I am in the Father and the Father in Me. The words that I say unto you I speak not from Myself; but the Father abiding in Me doeth His works." So Jesus teaches us that we may live our lives in this friendly universe in the company of our Father, Whose physical body, manifested in the universe with all its majesty, beauty, order, intelligence, wisdom and love makes Him known, just the same as we live here with our friends and loved ones, whose spirits we never see with our physical eyes, and whose personalities we know only as we come in contact with them through the functioning of their physical bodies.

We may choose to believe this or to disbelieve it. To believe that our fellowship with the visible universe which lies about us, is fellowship with our heavenly Father, Whose physical body is the universe, is just as reasonable, however, as to believe that our intercourse with our friends is real, who have no other way of expressing themselves, but through their physical bodies. Jesus asks us to exercise faith in God. He says, live as though God were and you will know that He is. Some, however, choose to live as though there were no God. They are free to do so. Just as a man is free to deny that there are any other people in the world besides himself. But we do not take such people seriously. We pity them and wish that their condition might be better. So the man who accepts a view of the universe which excludes God, Whose divine personality is the spirit-filled universe functioning, shuts himself up to a universe where life cannot be taken seriously. But they who have enrolled in the Christ school, have learned to know a Friend Who is more than a friend, a loving, kind and tender Father, Who is everywhere present in the universe in which we live, and Who is present to help us in our time of need.

CHAPTER V

SPIRITUAL ATMOSPHERE

"WE don't believe in ghosts, holy or otherwise," is the reply a young man gave me one time when speaking to an informal gathering of young people, and the Holy Spirit was mentioned. The young man was perfectly sincere. In this highly practical age, how can anyone believe in any immaterial presence? Would it not be better for sane people to confine themselves to things that can be seen and handled, even in matters of religion? The practical man refers to deal with realities. In erecting a building, the contractor busies himself with brick, stone, mortar, timber, etc. The banker deals with gold and silver and bonds, all of which are tangible. The merchant deals with sugar and meat and cloth, so many yards for so many dollars. It sounds then, like being transported into another world to say, "Ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me and I in you." "Abide in Me." "Lo, I am with you alway." If Jesus lived two thousand years ago how can He be present today? If we do not believe in haunted houses, how can we believe in the Holy Spirit? What do we mean by spiritual reality? Does anything exist that cannot be seen, or heard?

The contractor, in erecting a great building, deals only with real things. But the very first real thing that engages his attention is the law of gravity. This is not a thing that he can see or handle, but if he disregards it, he and his building will soon come to grief. The bank president wants to employ clerks who are honest, as well as capable of handling gold and silver. Yet, who ever saw honesty or met honesty? We cannot see or hear honesty, but who will question that there is such a thing as honesty? In like manner we cannot see Jesus Christ with our physical eyes, nor hear Him with our physical ears, nevertheless He is real. The great reality about Christ is not the mere fact of His physical existence in Palestine two thousand years ago. It is the stupendous fact that the Spirit that was in Jesus, was and is present in the world, and is everywhere and always present. That Spirit literally fills the universe and is just as real as gravity or honesty.

Some present day psychologists are telling us that mind and soul and spirit are all unreal. That they are just the result of the motion of "neutral stuff, made up of events," whatever that may mean. They also have the same thing to say about body. It also, is made up of the "result of events." Now, most reasonable persons will concede that if the psychologist will grant that the experiences of the soul and spirit are as real as the experiences of the body they are satisfied and this, many phychologists do not deny.

What is the soul? Let us suggest some lines along which we may be able to find an answer to this question. The story is told of a man who once visited a village in the great northwest and saw an old man sitting on a store box in his front yard. He asked the old man, in a kindly way, what he did there all day long. The old man replied, "Well I just sit and think, and sometimes I just sit." The point I wish to make is that it is utterly impossible to sit without thinking. If you will pause in the midst of any task on which you are engaged, and if you will look into your own mind—making use of the process called introspection—you will find that you are indeed thinking and that you are always thinking as long as you are awake. It is impossible for you to find yourself in any condition of awakened life where you are not exercising thought.

Of course it does not need to be very profound thought. I do not mean to suggest that you are always engaged in trying to work out some philosophical theory of the universe, but you are always thinking about something. Mental activity is constantly going on. You may be thinking about a trip to New York City, or about buying a new suit of clothes, or what you are going to have for dinner, or where the money is going to come from to buy the things you are going to have for dinner. It is impossible for you not to think during your waking hours. If you don't believe that, you may put it to the test at once; you may try to stop thinking now and see what happens.

But, after awhile you will go to rest and will, I trust, sleep well. Tomorrow morning you will rise refreshed and you will be able to remember what happened today; not, perhaps, all the details, but the chief events. You will remember that you met certain of your friends this afternoon and you will remember, in a general way, where you spent the morning hours. But a still more remarkable thing than that is likely to happen. In all probability, before tomorrow ends, you will gather some of your friends about you and you will talk to those friends about things that happened twenty-four hours ago, or perhaps ten years ago. You will go way back into the distant places and into the far-off days, and you will, perhaps, tell about your childhood and about your home and about the precious adventures and about people who are now, perhaps, in other parts of the world.

How do you know that these things ever happened? What is it that binds together this marvellous process of thinking that is going on within you and me at this present moment, with tomorrow and with yesterday and with the far-off years? You know now that you are the same individuals that played with marbles or with dolls years ago. Lots of things have happened to you since; you have passed through many joys and many sorrows; you have had your victories and your setbacks but you know, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that you are the same individuals. The thing that binds up our days in this unity of which each sane person is conscious, is the soul; the soul is the unity of your life. The soul is, of course, not a part of your body; no surgeon ever found a soul while he was conducting a surgical operation; no surgeon ever will, because the soul is not made up of the kind of stuff with which the surgeon works. The soul is that which thinks the thought which belongs to your mind now. You cannot have a thought without a thinker; you cannot have a thought process without some sort of control of the process, and the controlling power is the soul, or the self, or the spirit—whatever you choose to call it—and the name doesn't matter much.

I would like to go a little farther and speak of the powers of the soul, that is to say, things that we can do with our souls, but which we cannot do with our bodies, and which no thinking without a soul is capable of doing at all. First of all, the soul has the power of judgement. Two things are placed before you, perhaps two pictures, and you pronounce one of them to be a good picture and the other to be a bad picture. There is nothing in this universe of God that can pass that judgement save a soul only. That power is unknown in the universe save in the soul. It may be that the things presented to your judgement are not two pictures, but two courses of action. Two proposals are made to you of the course you ought to pursue tomorrow, and you think about them and you pronounce one of them to be bad and the other to be good. Have you ever tried to analyse that process of judgement? Have you ever tried to see just all that goes to make that judgement possible? All the education and all the memory and all the desire and all the insight that go to make it possible for you to make a judgement at all, and which go to determine the sort of judgement you shall make?

Nor is this all that the soul is able to do. Besides passing judgement, the soul is able to conceive purposes. That is to say, having viewed these two courses of action, for example, your soul is able to determine that it shall, at all cost, pursue the one or the other. The soul is able to say within itself; "By adopting this particular course of action I shall incur certain forms of expense; I shall inflict certain forms of injury upon myself or upon others or, on the contrary, I shall win for myself, and possibly for others, radiant crowns of triumph." And, having weighed the meaning of one course and the meaning of the other, you give yourself to one of them and you pursue your purpose through thick and thin. It is not necessarily the good one that you choose; that has, at present, nothing to do with it. The point that I am making is that, day by day, you build your purpose up until at last, for good or evil, you have brought it to completion. One of the most solemn capacities of the soul is its capacity to conceive and carry out a purpose.

Once more, the soul has the power of persuasion. That is to say it has the power of bringing other people into alliance with itself in the securing of some purpose which it has conceived. You are able to approach your friends, for instance, and you explain to them the inner purpose of your life. It may be some great evil purpose, some purpose for the destruction of the lives of men; or, it may be some noble, Christlike purpose, some purpose of redemption. And you are able so to influence the souls of others that they come and join you in the striving after that purpose of your own. It is not by your body that you do that. It is not a physical alliance into which you enter. It is an alliance of thought; an alliance of desire; an alliance of purpose, a spiritual alliance. And that power of persuasion has proved to be one of the greatest powers in the history of mankind, both for evil and for good. If there were no such power in the human soul, and if we had each to pursue a solitary path and a solitary purpose, no purpose would ever be secured by man. It is only by cooperating that we can secure any purpose, whether it be good or bad.

The highest function of the soul is the function of worship. This soul of mine has the power to draw near to God and, in some measure, to understand the thoughts and the purposes of God and, in some measure, to cooperate with those divine purposes. That is a very mysterious power of the soul and yet, perhaps not after all so mysterious as it seems. For what is your soul made of? The scientist can analyse your body in the laboratory and tell you of what ingredients it is made up. Of what is your soul made? Your soul is made up of nothing in the world but thoughts, and desires, and purposes and of memories—spiritual things, without any material content; things that are never seen in any laboratory; things of which the chemist, as such, has not and cannot have any knowledge. What is God made of? God is made of the same stuff as your soul. God is made of thought, and of desire and of purpose. The human soul and the living God are made of the same thing, and that is what is meant by the saying that we are made in the image of God; and that is why we dare to believe that we shall live in His glorious presence forever! We can draw near to God and find our freedom and our joy in His most holy fellowship, because He and we are made of the same stuff, namely, thoughts, purposes, desires, memories, etc. And what is spirit? Spirit is mind, shot through and through with God. This helps us to understand what Jesus meant when He said, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

As this process of activity goes on and on and on without ceasing, every part of the process affects the part that is yet to come. In other words, you and I are, day by day, fashioning our character and the quality of our souls. The sort of things you think today is going to determine what sort of man you are going to be tomorrow; and today and tomorrow will conspire to determine the quality of the day that shall come after. In other words, it is literally correct to say that each of us is becoming, day by day, a worse or a better person. No person can think a high thought today without finding it in the texture of his soul tomorrow, because that is part of what his soul is made up of. And no man can think high thoughts of God today without being a sweeter, purer, stronger soul tomorrow!

What can we say about the Holy Spirit Whom Jesus sometimes called the "Spirit of Truth," and sometimes the "Comforter?" J. M. Murry says, "The Spirit was that plenary addition to Himself [Jesus] that came from His experience of God. It was simply that part or power of God which abides with Jesus or any man after his union with God. It was not God, for God was other than Himself. It was not Himself, for He was other than He had been. It was the God Who henceforth was in Himself." We have some comprehension of what it means to be upright. We know the difference between a person who tries to live an honourable and a square life and one who is always doing perverted things. Now the Holy Spirit is the Spirit Who is absolutely upright, sincere, fair and honest. It is His presence in our lives that gives us power, just as His presence in the life of Jesus gave Him power. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me." It is this Spirit in our lives Who enables us to recognise sin, and how terrible it is, and helps us to understand the significance of holiness. It is this Spirit, also Who leads us to knowledge, and this is a fine thing for young people to know. Jesus says of the Holy Spirit, "He shall teach you all things," and again, "He shall guide you into all the truth." We are often amazed to look about us and see people in very humble circumstances and stations in life, meeting the tests of experience with surprising strength, and solving the knotty problems of life with the utmost discretion, while others, much more highly favoured in every way, are completely nonplussed and outwitted. The difference between these two persons is the fact that the former is in possession of the Holy Spirit and the latter is not.

We can cultivate the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Every day we are aware of good thoughts and kind wishes springing up within us. This is the Holy Spirit striving to let us know that He is present with us and that He desires to abide with us. Whenever you find yourself planning some kindness, God is there. When you face a temptation and turn manfully from it, God is present. By repeatedly recognising Him in these stirrings of our own better nature, we become better and better acquainted with Him and learn to enjoy His divine friendship. At length there will come to us an understanding of the great spiritual messages in a special degree, because of the illumination of the spirit. This is called inspiration. And by this I mean that there is knowledge which men do not gain of themselves; knowledge which would be beyond their attainment were it not imparted to them; knowledge which comes to them and through them to us, by way of God's revelation. We have been accustomed to associate more or less closely, and limit this conception of inspiration, to its appearance in connection with the writing of the Holy Scriptures. We believe that these sacred writings contain the self-revelation of God. We believe God has spoken thus for the instruction and guidance of men. We believe that holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Yet, in all of this, we are too prone to think of the whole matter of inspiration as if it were quite apart from any such ordinary experiences as our own. We have felt that the prophets belonged to another age and another experience. We have thought that, at one time, God broke the eternal silence, but permitted that silence again to close in upon the world. We have assumed that God spoke to the fathers of old, but speaks thus to men no more. But, if our Christian experience is to be valid for us we must believe that the men of old, who spoke as the Holy Spirit moved them, are, in every sense, our spiritual kinsmen. Does it seem to be going beyond the truth of things to recognise, in our highest moments, in rare, but real hours, when we see clearly, the presence of some great truth and the same great revealing operation of the Divine Presence? The realm of the spirit lies all about us. It is as true for us and as near to us as it was to our fathers. This is what Sir Edwin Arnold means in one of his profound and more elusive poems in which he speaks of the "larger world upon our own impinging," whereof we have swift glimpses and momentary awareness. He compares this experience to our knowledge of "spacious circles, luminous with mind," to the light which comes from the hidden sun when some dark cloud is "touched to a sudden glory round the edge." By this he means that just as the ring of silver or gold, or rose, or crimson, that borders the sunset cloud, is not in itself a thing of light, but that it is the revelation of the greater life of the unseen sun, so these radiant and enlightened moments of the spirit are the indications and proof of the eternal light-giving spirit which is thereby made evident and knowable.

There should be something of the prophet in every

Christian. Every preacher or Sunday School teacher, however humble, should have some touch of prophetic fire. Every worshipper in the pew should sometimes hear and sometime re-utter the voice of the Spirit. There should be something of the prophet in every man. He should have awareness, however partial; he should have beholding, however dim; he should have knowledge, however incomplete, of reality beyond his immediate experience. God speaks to every man who will hear. Certainly we have no warrant for supposing that the Holy Spirit becomes silent.

In one of his poems, Edgar Fawcett, in describing the oriole, speaks of the glad moment when it was Nature's choice to "dower a scrap of sunset with a voice." But what should this scrap of sunset, or any other fragment of glory, be but the immediate reflection of a vaster beauty, a more perfect splendour? The sunset itself, all of it, is but the cloud reflected light from a hidden sun. And our high moments are times when we have some glimpse of the wonder and beauty of God's world. And thus it is, therefore, that these scraps of sunset, these moments of vision, revealed and declared, show us that there is a surrounding universe of light and truth and beauty. It is from these first glimpses that men reach on to their fuller knowledge. It is from these prophetic splendours that men, by the eye of faith, behold the invisible.

Think for a moment how this is true in the great realm of science. Men have always lived in a universe of order and law. But men have not always known these truths. One day some man got the first thought of it—caught the first glimpse of it. Imagine the world-changing moments when a Copernicus or a Columbus first compassed in fearless thought, the idea of a new universe, or of continents beyond uncharted seas! Imagine the world-changing moment when Newton lays hold of the idea of universal gravitation, or when Edison or Bell first realise that light and sound can travel along a wire! Everything that we have gained in the world of knowledge was at one time new.

In the realm of religion, as well as elsewhere, there have been men of genius who first thought the thoughts of God in the kingdom of the spirit. How sublime a poem is the first chapter of Genesis! How noble an utterance is the One hundred Twenty-first Psalm! How ageless the beauty of the Shepherd Psalm! Each of these great utterances of the spirit, beautiful in itself, is a scrap of sunset, revealing the greater glory of the other shining Light, which truly giveth light to every man that cometh into the world. Any man who is not blind may behold the sunset; any man whose spirit is not clouded, may have some glimpse of prophetic insight. There comes to many of us moments of genius when we feel deeply and truly, when we see clearly and see far. And there come to all of us our times of, at least, some measure of understanding of the deeper things of the soul. Why then, can we not believe in our highest hours? Why can we not trust in our flashes of insight, when we see above and beyond our ordinary vision?

The Christian should see things by the light of a true spiritual understanding. He should see the common things more clearly and appreciate their beauty and meaning. He should also be a prophet and a poet. He should be able to see the oriole as a scrap of sunset and the sunset itself as the gleaming of a universal beauty.

And above everything else, he should see the great things. He should see the goodness and the glory of God. He should see the meaning and the value of His kingdom. He should see Jesus as the fulness of the Father's glory and the revealer of the Father's love. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." He should see the Holy Spirit at his work, as he "convicts the world in respect of sin, righteousness and judgement." It is in this sense that the Christian should be a prophet. Not the prophet of a magical foretelling, or of a mythical pretense, but the prophet of a clear beholding, of a deep understanding, and of a blessed imparting to his fellows; of that which his eyes have seen and his ears have heard of the mysteries of God. Does all this seem unreal? It is no more unreal than the processes which sustain natural life. We breathe the air into our lungs and live thereby. In the same way, we can breathe in law, order, beauty, intelligence, obedience, love, etc.; all spiritual realities which fill our world like air. "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love," says Jesus. In other words, just to meditate upon the teaching of Jesus, just to put into practise the things which He teaches, is to breathe the atmosphere of the Spirit.

VI

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

HAECKEL says duty is "a long series of phyletic modifications of the phronema of the cortex," which means, I suppose, that our sense of duty originates in certain physical movements in the outer layer of the brain. The Christian poet, Wordsworth, speaks of duty as the "stern daughter of the voice of God." To the one duty is merely a physical movement in the brain; to the other it is the voice of God in the human soul. Recent psychology is following the materialistic suggestion of Haeckel. It reasons like this:—I am not responsible for my race, colour, inherited tendencies, or stature; why then should I be responsible for my conduct? I am merely a bundle of instincts, centred about a nervous system. Everything I do is done because this bundle of instincts, which I call myself, is stimulated by a veritable maze of influences over which I have no control. Therefore, how can I be responsible for what I am?

The chemist verifies the findings of the psychologist by declaring that our character and disposition are very largely determined by chemical reactions. If the internal glands are not functioning properly the character of a man, as well as his physical health, will be affected, and the thing to do is to inject a certain kind of serum into his blood and he will be all right. A noted scientist is quoted as saying, "The chemist of the future will turn from his humble task of providing the conveniences of life and gain control of life itself. He may mould stature and character as the sculptor moulds his clay. . . . Courage is not a matter of "sand" but of sugar. A variation of a few hundredths of one per cent. of glucose in the blood may make the difference between cowardice and courage; may determine whether a man shall be shot as a slacker or medalled as a hero." Now, as seekers after truth, we shall welcome every discovery regarding the natural forces that enter into the making of a man, as long as it is sincere and constructive. If chemistry and dietetics have contributions to make to the "fearfully and wonderfully made" creature called man, well and good. But, man is more than the sum total of the chemical constituents of his body. These constituents are worth, we are told, ninety-eight cents, drug store value. Men's economic value as prescribed by the insurance companies, is somewhat better. It is $4,999.02.

But the measurement of human values can hardly be equated on the basis of either a pound of flesh or man's economic weight or anthropology. There is rather a spiritual impetus which lends a forcefulness to man's importance in the universe. Job asks: "What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him, and that Thou shouldest set Thy heart upon him?" A very deliberate question which cannot be answered by the statistician. The spiritual man holds the secret of life in his grasp. The Christian says: Whatever else I am, I know that, in the last analysis, my moral character and spiritual worth depend upon the exertion of my will." He deliberately constructs a path on which to walk. He consciously seeks, and searches and penetrates and discerns. His efforts are glorified because of his will to outlive his primitive and imperfect state. If it were not that man had deliberately sustained this desire throughout the ages, he would be living in the likeness of the lower animal. What would this world amount to if it were not for discovery and invention? Modern improvements, innovations and appurtenances are the products of man's deliberate efforts, not chance. It is not a chance inquisitiveness that causes him to seek a way out. Much rather it is the urgent demand of necessity for comfort and convenience that stimulates his will to undertake greater things. Man has continued to search into the past for a better understanding of the present and as a preparation for the future.

How is fine character attained? By searching for the better self. In the highly figurative language of the Scriptures, Jesus Himself could not "sit down at the right hand of God," except by searching out the way of Gethesmane and Calvary. Our lives also attain glory, beauty, dignity and worth through diligent moral searching. Jesus said, "Enter ye in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straightened the way that leadeth unto life and few are they that find it." The gate is not narrow simply for the purpose of keeping people out of heaven, but if it were not narrow there would be no souls fit to enter into heaven. As some one has said: "Passing through the rigours of experience with rigour of effort, means strength and beauty of character."

Man's superiority does not exist in the flesh nor in his physical importance. Instead, his elevation above the lower animals is due to the conscious effort of heart and mind, the coordination of which spiritualizes every act and deed he commits. In this material life in which man lives he must be taught that he does not live by bread alone. There are higher and bigger things which are considered as ideal. The mortal is only mortal. The physical is only physical. The material is only material. The spiritual carries within itself a power which transcends man to luminous heights. "We have seen this day that God doth walk with man, and he liveth." With God in man's heart, he becomes incomparable and unconquerable. Man, therefore, means something more than just a chemical constituency. His value must represent a profound entity. His life is made abundant through conscious aspirations, dreams and efforts, and not merely by the amount of sugar that has gotten into his blood.

What all the world is seeking for is life, life, more life,—rich, creative life. Now and then a man appears alive to his finger-tips, a man who never tires, whose enthusiasm never wanes, as apostle, patriot, reformer, missionary—a man glowing like some planet, sparkling with ten thousand effects. Once a century we behold one or two of these vitalised men, a spiritual dynamo, some Paul flinging off laws, reforms, martyrdoms, and then riding into the sky, perchance, in a chariot of flame. What man wants is life physical, and that means abounding health, passion for work, an eager longing for such new days to come bringing productive industry. Man wants life intellectual, and that means a hungry mind, a constant growth, increasing culture, a consciousness of being equal to any emergency. Man wants life for his affections and that means increasing capacity for friendship and loyalty to those he loves, with power to keep his friendships in repair. Man wants life spiritual, and that brings the gift of peace, freedom from worry, plenary power over all disasters and trouble. The secret of happiness and success is in a deep, uprising life, rushing forth in exterior service. What we call failure is often the consciousness that there is a gap between our ambition and our performance. Watson has a fine statement, "Give that despairing musician an atom of Mozart's melodious brain; that halting poet, a spark of Shakespeare's fire; that struggling painter, a nerve of Turner's colour-sense; that stammering orator a little of Demosthenes' tongue, and bitter failure will be at an end; there will be no more exhausting difficulty and delay, only the intoxicating sense of mastery, progress and delight." More life in the learner is what is needed, and then every difficulty is vanquished and every aspiration fulfilled. Now, that is the secret of Christ's mission: He comes to give life—rich, creative life. Concerning the great missionaries, prophets and heroes, let us say, "Christ was in them, the mainspring of their energy, the hope of their glory," and where Christ is, things do not merely happen. The men in whom Christ moves and acts are responsible men who will exercise power and faith.

It is comparison and contrast that gives the sense of value and ranks world leaders. All other religious teachers came craming men's minds with their cut and dried traditions and institutions. Confucius came with his cut and dried system of reverence for ancestors and for yesterday, and when a hundred years had passed, paralysis had fallen upon the creative faculty of the Chinese and made progress a baseless fabric of a dream. Buddha came digging a chasm between men, annihilating sensitiveness of feeling, delicacy of emotion, and the heaven he promised was unconsciousness. Buddha taught self-immolation and progressive hardening of the heart. Jesus came pouring life into the soul of the individual and then appealed to that individual's responsibility, allowing each individual to express himself. Each temperament wrote its own creed, each race wrote its own litany, each tribe develops its own policy and form of government in the light of its own responsibility.

What the sun does depends upon the soil and seed. The sun falls on the prairies of Minnesota and the soil responds with wheat. The sun falls upon the soil of the south, and the soil answers with cotton. The sun falls on the soil of Cuba and Cuba responds with sugar. The sun says to the violet, "Here is abundance: take what you will," and the violet takes a little sunlight and responds with perfume, just as the oak takes much sunlight and responds with timber for ships. Likewise, Christ came with life, like the summer-making sun. His light fell upon Wittenberg and Martin Luther responded with the Bible. His light fell upon Geneva and John Calvin responded with "The Institutes of Theology." His light fell on England and Wesley responded with the Freedom of the Will and the Right of Choice. The light fell on the new world and Jonathan Edwards responded with his "Freedom of the Will" and Beecher answered with his statement concerning the love of God. And now, China is founding a Christian church and that church will have a Chinese creed, Chinese psalms and a Chinese order of government. It is this disinterested "life," given to all races and peoples, that makes inevitable a difference of theologies, forms of government and worship. There is one glory of the flowers, another glory of the grains, and another glory of the trees, but the sun is one and the same, just as different churches have their own excellence but derive their precious qualities from the same God and Father and common Master of us all. Yet, all of this is utterly unthinkable without each individual, each church, and each race, being responsible for the kind of expression which it gives to the divine stimulus. The very differences in temperament and divergences in creed argue for individual responsibility.

It is this rich, creative, divine life, pouring into responsible disciples of Christ, which brings immunity to temptation and sin. Scientists tell us that the air we breathe is always filled with disease germs. From time to time some plague-stricken ship drops anchor in one of our harbours, and the health authorities become alarmed and the people panic-stricken. Quarantine rules are applied, ships are disinfected and the bedding in the cabins is burned. Every precaution is taken lest the plague spread. When these scientific precautions are taken, and the people have plenty of wholesome food to eat and take plenty of sleep and exercise and keep their minds free from worry, the best authorities tell us there is little danger of the plague getting a foothold. But, if the people take a fatalistic attitude and become irresponsible, America would soon become plague infected like the Orient. The best way to keep down the weeds is to sow the newly ploughed soil with wheat or oats. It is the shade of the new oats or wheat that holds in check the weeds. But if the farmer takes the attitude that weeds will grow anyway and fails to plant the wheat, he can raise no crop. The mere absence of thorns and thistles through the negatives of Moses involves starvation. Instead, Jesus began anew, where the negatives of Moses stopped, and He, pouring His life into responsible souls, rushes on to achieve the positives. Thou shalt love, thou shalt hope, thou shalt trust, thou shalt serve. The inrushing life of Christ forces back the old life of selfishness and sin. The life of God was in David Livingstone and he responded in obedient love and self sacrifice. One day Stanley fled from a poor, miserable, diseased creature lying beside the road, but Livingstone felt responsibility for the sufferer, went to his side, picked him up, carried him to a stream, washed his filthy body and administered aid. Light is the antiseptic for material germs, but obedient love and trust are the great medicines of our spiritual therapeutics.

In bringing this new life, Jesus released certain latent and unsuspected powers in man. In his essay on the duty of performing the impossible and realising tasks beyond man's present strength and wisdom, the late William James insists that there are whole strata of undeveloped faculties in the human soul. Professor James believed that every man could double his working capacity, increase his efficiency, and achieve as a man, deeds attributed to the sons of God. He tells us about men lost in the desert, whose last atom of strength seemed to be exhausted—men who had fallen unconscious upon the sand, yet in stumbling on a dying woman or child, the traveller's instinct and will were startled and they began to draw upon the substratum of energy and go on untired, bearing burdens undreamed of before. He speaks of soldiers, unconscious through sheer exhaustion and too weak to lift a finger, but when some one shouts into his ear the story of a new peril, suddenly the tired man revives, opens the door into a new chamber of strength, calls forth hidden energies and strides forward as fresh as if he had never heard of being tired. In California, the upper strata of oil-bearing sand is exhausted. Derricks scattered about were pulled down and a landscape, hitherto unsightly, was restored to beauty. Some scientists, however, believed that there might be a second underlying oil-bearing stratum of sand, and the new borings brought gushers, and now, after being exhausted a second time, the oil men of California explored nearly a mile in depth and opened up still newer fields, and today, out of those deep-lying, strangely hidden strata, California is producing abundance of oil. Jesus believed in man. "Stretch forth thy hand," He said to the cripple with the shrivelled arm. Once the man felt that it was his duty to perform the impossible he tried to obey, and so won back his health. The shock of a new creative life, flowing from a new graft into an old stalk, holds Burbank's secret of producing new flowers, new fruits, new trees. "I am come to give life." That means that the ambitious, responsible boy can grow, that it is always better farther on for those who respond. How wonderful is the opportunity for the next generation!

How easily man can double his working capacity and his efficiency! The manufacturer widens his drainage area for the purpose of getting a deeper and more powerful current to pound upon his turbines. The engineer increases his voltage with the aim of widening the walls of the world room into which he is speaking. What a coward was Peter, following afar off! How timid was John! Then came Jesus and laid His hands upon these young disciples, pouring the life of God into their souls and they, responding with determination, rose with the making of heroes. But always the method is the same. The life of God, rushing into responsible human lives, who respond in communicating this life to other responsible souls. Jesus poured His life into the souls of the twelve; then the twelve touched the lives of the three thousand; they poured their life into the forty thousand, and so Christianity became a mighty stream, surging through the Roman Empire and down through the centuries changing everything before it. Today there are over eight hundred million Christians in the world. If this vast company should put on a forward movement, the other half of the human race could easily be evangelised within the present generation. But that would mean that each Christian must realise that he is a responsible creature, responsible not only for himself, but for communicating the Gospel to those about him. In short, Christianity is builded on the assumption that men and women are responsible creatures. Every one of you must give an account to God for your own condition, the condition of your church, your city and your commonwealth.

Do not, at your peril, ask for the divine gift and then try to hoard it for yourself. Eternal life is kept by giving it away. The disciple grows by serving and sacrificing. Physical growth comes through good food, plenty of sleep and fresh air and exercise. The growing lad, playing baseball, exerts himself in pitching, and stretches the muscle a little farther than it has ever been stretched before; at that instant the blood rushes in and holds the taut muscle so that it cannot spring back to its former position and so much positive growth has taken place. In like manner spiritual growth comes through spiritual exercise, such as praying for the poor, serving the unhappy and unfortunate, befriending the lonely and the imprisoned. In other words, spiritual growth comes through conscious exercise of will power and faith.

The continuity of selfhood is the ground of the moral responsibility which attaches to each of us, throughout our lives, and which no chicanery, psychological or otherwise, will allow us to escape. The conviction that we are accountable for the facts of our whole past is embedded deeply, not only in our training but in our consciousness. Common law, which gives security to society, rests upon it. The crime committed yesterday, or ten years ago, is ours still and must be answered for before the law, personal and civil.

Doubtless the principle of moral responsibility has often been too stringently and stupidly applied, but unless it holds good, the whole social order falls apart. There is much today in the teaching of psychology and sociology, to break down or to cast suspicion upon this principle built up through generations of moral discipline and experience, but it may still be trusted to hold. What is needed, is not to abrogate it, but to study how to apply it with a juster and more intelligent regard for all the factors and conditions involved. Whatever adaptations and modifications of it, due to heredity or temperament, or peculiar conditions, should be made, moral accountability itself is not something to tamper with or toss lightly into the changing current of theory or experiment.

Does Jesus teach personal responsibility? Let us see. His first message is "Repent." There could be no repentance without responsibility. He challenges us to deny ourselves and follow Him; to dedicate ourselves to service; to take up our cross daily and to face and overcome the tribulations of this world. In all this He teaches us that we are responsible beings. The unseen spiritual forces all about the Christian make it possible for him to become the master of his own destiny. It is not at all times easy to be a Christian. It was not easy for the first disciples and it is not easy for men and women today. Jesus says, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter it and shall not be able." Here the word, "strive" means to agonise. Jesus sets the standard of Christian life on no lower plane than that of perfection. "Ye therefore, shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." This, of course, means that the Christian is not to be content so long as he is in any respect imperfect. It means struggle, self-denial, self-control, and conscious effort.

As Christians, we accept the position of Jesus, that man is responsible for his own moral character. The determining factor in a man's character is his freedom of choice. I can choose to be a good man, or I can choose to be an evil man, and each man must abide by the consequences of his choice, enjoying the rewards or suffering the punishment of the choice which he has made. And these must be considered, not as arbitrary, but as natural consequences. If a man chooses evil, he just naturally shuts himself off from God, who abhors evil. If he chooses good, he places himself within the reach of God, who is "infinite, eternal, and unchangeable" in His goodness. Let us then emphasise strongly the conviction that man is a free, moral agent, who is responsible for his own soul. If we are denied this conviction, then man dwindles in importance and becomes merely the dupe of a higher power, dancing up and down much as needles and pins dance up and down under the influence of a magnet.

VII

COMRADESHIP

DR. STOCKMAN reminds us that the temper of our age is against insincerity. We have revolted against mid-Victorian upholstery in furniture, customs and manners. We insist upon frankness in speech, candour in conduct, realism in art and reality in life generally. Many are insisting that our inherited institutions be overhauled in order that all useless machinery, empty ceremonies and idle words be thrown into the discard. Nowhere do we demand this sincerity so imperatively as in matters of religion. We feel, instinctively, that church members should be more honourable than the people of the street. And this is one of the hopeful signs of our times. There are many, however, who claim that the church is the one place where the shell of pretense is so great and the kernel of reality is so small. With all its buildings, its meetings, its budgets, its activities, is it rendering any service sufficiently real to challenge the interest and attention of the man of affairs? I invited an enterprising young business man to attend my church one time, and after inquiring the exact hour of worship, he replied, "All right, if I have nothing else to do at that time, I'll come." This man spoke the mind of many. "If I have nothing else to do at that time, I'll come." But, is there anything vital enough in church worship to warrant a man to come if he has anything else to do?

We often hear the critics of the Church speak of the "good, old days" of our fathers, when church-going was reputed to have been the confirmed American habit. I have in my possession the original manuscripts of a number of sermons written out and delivered by one of the most popular ministers and from one of the best known pulpits in the city of Philadelphia, Pa., between the years 1881 and 1904, in which this mighty man of God and well-beloved pastor intimates that the churches of Philadelphia are not well attended and too many people are being lost because of unbelief. The current criticisms and comments passed on the Church by the people of that day sound strikingly similar to a list of comments and criticisms that might be drawn up today. The Church was *not* enjoying an unquestioned prestige in the days of our fathers.

When we look back to Puritan New England we expect to find the Church unassailed. Certainly, in that day, people were not discussing the failures of the Church, were they? But read the sermons of Cotton Mather and John Higginson and we find that they deplore the fact that religion, "is exceedingly decaying and expiring in this country." The truth is, the Christian Church has never enjoyed a "Garden of Eden" in America.

The Christian Church has always been under fire, and may I say, has always deserved to be under fire. Paul spake the truth when he said, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." Nevertheless, that early Church, so earthly, so defective, succeeded in planting a new religion and a new social ideal in the soil of the Caesars. It kindled a new home in the heart of humanity. It developed men who could live kindly, moral lives in the midst of cruelty and vice. It produced persons who, as Dr. Glover says, "outthought, outlived and outdied" those who were round about them.

No honest thinker can deny the shortcomings of the colonial Church, yet, where is there an honest person who will dare to deny the perfectly enormous contribution made by that Church to the beginnings of our commonwealth. To follow the history of New England the reader is compelled to walk in the footsteps of her preachers. In Pennsylvania, the formative influence of the Quakers, the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and the German Lutherans; in Maryland, the Roman Catholics; in the Carolinas, the Huguenots, and leading the advance over the Alleghanies were the Methodists circuit-riders, sharing the hardships of the pioneers, shuttling in and out of the new settlements, weaving the softer threads of religion into the courser threads of the rough frontier life.

The Church, which in all ages has impressed multitudes with the signs of its decay, has in those same periods, possessed an undying vitality. And even amid the present chorus of criticism, we hear the amazing news that the proportion of church membership in the population of the United States has risen from 34% in 1890 to 50% in 1929. There are two facts that can be stated with confidence about the Church. First, it is full of defects; second, it has a secret of strength to sustain its appeal, despite its weakness—"we have this treasure in earthen vessels."

A very free rendering of John 13:34 is, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye stand by one another as I have stood by you, that ye also stand by one another." Here Jesus certainly had in mind that Christians are to be kind and generous with everybody, but He also had something else in mind. He realised that He was sending His disciples out into an unfriendly world. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." There would be much criticism and persecution, therefore they would have to stand by one another. If the disciples had not stood by one another, the Gospel would never have survived. The opposition and the persecution would have caused its utter destruction within the first century. Paul himself required comradeship. Standing alone in the midst of a hostile world, the great Apostle to the Gentiles could have accomplished little or nothing. But, by the aid and encouragement of his comrades he literally accomplished the impossible.

To be a Christian, we have seen, means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Now, is it easier for one person to be a follower of Christ in a heathen community than for a score, a hundred, or a thousand? One Christian would find it impossible to practise the strict, moral precepts of Jesus Christ in the midst of heathen people for fear of his very life. But, if a score or a hundred band themselves together and determine to stand by one another in carrying out what they know to be required of Christians, it becomes much easier.

Christians require comradeship. It multiplies our joys and helps us bear our burdens. Where would you prefer to be living at a time when death comes to take away from your family one of your loved ones? Would you prefer to be living in a barbarous community in Africa, where no one could sympathise with you and help you bear the sorrow, or in Christian America, where the members of your own Sunday School and church could come to you and remind you of the promises of the Saviour regarding death and the life everlasting? Now, a Christian church is simply a group of followers of Jesus Christ, standing by one another, sharing each others joys and troubles, being mutually beneficial.

A few years ago, Mr. Walter Camp performed a great service for humanity by preparing a program of physical exercises which could be practised by the individual in his room. This is known as the "daily dozen," because it consisted of a dozen simple exercises that could be practised in the privacy of one's domicile. But, at the same time that the "daily dozen" was becoming popular all over America, physical directors in colleges and universities were laying more and more emphasis upon the regular, systematic, gymnasium classes, because they realised that the student was losing something vital to his physical culture and development if he failed to unite himself with the unified exercises on the part of the whole group. The "daily dozen" and the class in the gymnasium do not overlap whatsoever. Both have their place. Countless thousands may be unable to take their exercise in the college or municipal gymnasium. But those who can, are the losers if they neglect to do so. The Christian can unite himself with other Christians and be the stronger and better for it. The "solo flight" to heaven is a lonesome and monotonous route which can scarcely be justified when there are so many going in that same direction. The Church is not perfect, but it is the best we have. "We have this treasure in earthern vessels." What is this treasure within the earthen vessel of the Church? What is this kernel of reality buried within the shell of pretense? To attempt a full answer is far beyond the bounds of this chapter. Let me limit myself to the statement of just a few of the services which the Church through its local habitation renders me. For the sake of utter frankness I will speak in the first person. There are several services which are rendered me through the channel of public worship.

First of all I am helped to reappraise myself. "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind" is more true today than in the day when it was first written by Emerson. Our modern society is being speeded up to a terrific pace in order to keep up with the output of the factories. The most pertinent problem of business now is not how to produce enough to satisfy the demands, but rather how to enlarge the wants of men to consume what is being produced. We have developed the profession of advertising, the main point of which is to expand the human appetites in order to take care of our factory products. Things are the medium "in which we live, and move, and have our being." So dependent have we become upon things that we need a modern Robinson Crusoe to remind us how self-sufficient we could be if we were deprived of a mass of the things which we think to be absolutely necessary. Yes, more, we need the Master of Nazareth to lead us out from our thing-cluttered market places as He did the men of Jerusalem, and to reveal to us the wealth of enjoyment in life's simplicities.

The rushing mountain stream renders its service. It is dynamic. It turns water-wheels. But, when we wish to catch the reflection of the sky, we stop beside a quiet pool in whose calm depth we see the sky mirrored. Our torrential modern life is generating an abundance of industrial power; but we need the quiet pools wherein we can see the things that are above the earth, the things that are eternal. Now, the Church calls me from the torrential rushing stream of competitive, secular living, to look into the calm, deep, reflection of eternal value. The Church "leadeth me beside the still waters." It thus helps me to reappraise myself in terms of true standards.

A second service which the Church renders me through the channel of public worship is this: It helps me to repossess myself. Competitive, secular living often leaves me with a spent feeling. It dissipates my energy and distracts my mind. One of my greatest needs is to keep pulling myself together. In the complexity of modern life I sit like a weaver behind the loom six days a week, busily fingering the threads of an intricate pattern. On the seventh day the Church, through the channel of worship, calls me around to the front of the loom to look upon the pattern on which I have been working. It bids me compare the design of my days with the pattern shown me on the Mount of Sinai and the Mount of Olives. Some threads thereon I have to cut out; others I have to pull more tightly and, most of all, I renew my picture of the whole plan. The Church helps me to "see life steadily and to see it as a whole"; to repossess myself of the certitudes which have been mine in fleeting moments of insight; to reillumine the common day by the meditative recovery of the celestial light.

In this day of crowded schedules, high-powered transportation, never-turned-off radios, ceaseless-running cinemas, and overworked printing presses, we are doing a vastly increased amount of moving, hearing, talking and seeing, but a probably decreased amount of hard, meditative thinking. We are too restlessly busy to be still and think. Never was the mental pasture field so green as in this modern world of the twentieth century. Never was the temptation so strong to keep on devouring without stopping to ruminate. Never did man, the foolish sheep, need more acutely the shepherd to make him lie down in the green pastures and digest his experiences and impressions into the nourishment of the spirit. Now, the Church "maketh me to lie down in pastures green" as well as "leadeth me beside the waters still," and thus "restoreth my soul."

A third valuable service which the Church renders me through the channel of public worship, is that it helps to harness my transient, worthy moods, so that they become dominant motives. Like all men, I am given to fluctuating moods. There are times when I experience extraordinary faith, believing implicitly in the goodness of God and of my fellow-men. There are also moments of mystic insight, when the atmosphere clears and the very foothills of heaven are in sight. But there also come moods which cause me to "walk in the valley of the shadow of death." I experience unworthy moods when I live, as it were, in the basement of my being and take ignoble views of my environment. I also have critical hours, when I discount the good motives of my fellows and lose interest in the nobler things of life. These high and low tides of being come to all human creatures; to the strong as well as the weak. The mastering of these moods is one of the greatest secrets of successful living. In the handling of them the individual needs the help of the group. If left to himself too often the individual succumbs to the uncongenial mood and to the inconvenience of hours. It is quite true that a man can read his Bible, conduct his devotions and pray in private, but does he do so in private with any degree of regularity? We are all too much inclined to yield to the moods, when we do not feel like it or when we do not have the time just now. Contact with others tends to support a man in the slough of despond as it did Elijah. It helps him "lay aside every weight and the sin which doeth so easily beset him and run with patience the race that is set before him, looking unto Jesus, the author and perfector of his faith."

Men are swayed by the power of sympathy, suggestion and imitation. The sight of others praising God, instinctively, strengthens our feeling that God is praiseworthy. The symbols of worship, with their eloquent silence, the rhythmic surge of the religious music, the historic ritual of the Church, reminding us that a great procession of persons like ourselves have walked the same paths of experience; the sermon, which stirs our conscience and feeds our minds—all these combine to lift our spirits Godward. Just as a ship in the locks of a canal, when the sluice-gate is opened, rises by the inflow of water under its keel, so the soul in the house of God, when it submits to the influence of these means of grace, rises from its lower moods to a higher plane, whence it sails away, better able to carry its cargo of personal and public responsibility. These last words—public responsibility—point to a much overlooked truth of tremendous significance. Social service and brotherly deeds are often given as alibis for nonattendance at church-worship. One of the characteristics of our time is that so many socially minded people seem to feel that the Church is a useless accessory in the service of their fellow-men. It cannot be denied that the Church, as an institution, has often been slow and cumbersome in its social programs. Nevertheless, it is out of the atmosphere of the Church that the crusaders come who go out to attack the great social sins, and to carry on the greater works of charity and social up-lift. Just a few days ago I heard the chairman of the St. Louis Community Fund make the remark publicly, that ninety per cent. of the contributions to the Fund in St. Louis come from the members of the churches. Without the atmosphere of the churches, created by the spirit of worship, the spirit of social service would cease to be truly effective.

The only way that men can be made to feel permanently and dominantly brotherly towards one another, is through the influence of religion. Viewed from the earthly level, our fellow-men do not always look lovable to us. Our moods of brotherliness come and go. Our circles of sympathy expand and contract in clannish fashion. But that is not the divine way of brotherliness. Christ was brotherly, not only when men were feting Him, but when they were crucifying Him. Christ was affectionate, not only to His family, His class, and His race, but to the outcasts, sinners and Samaritans. Society can be redeemed into a brotherhood, not by the mere moody club spirit of abiding love, but by steady, continuous brotherliness, the same yesterday, today and forever. It is the Church which helps to sustain our fleeting moods of divinity, until they become the dominant moods of our Christianity.

The Church also helps me to be a more useful member of the community and the commonwealth. I believe in my Master, Jesus Christ; you, also, believe in Him and

His principles, and hundreds of others share the same convictions with us. But no one of us alone would have the moral courage to do what He wants us to do if we were to act alone. But we get together in the Church; there is expression of common ideals; the contagion spreads and, before long, we are all carrying forward the high ideals of our common Master, whereas, before we lacked the courage and initiative to do so. This is what the psychologist would call group emotion, and group emotion is the source of religious zeal. It needs the rational guidance which the Church can give it. If allowed to run undirected, it becomes fanaticism. Take, for instance, the mob violence which is sometimes practised. A group of infuriated persons gather together and bind a man who differs from them in his convictions or is accused of some evil deed. A collective feeling compels these infuriated men to hang this individual to the branch of a tree, or saturate his clothes with oil and burn his body at a stake. No one of these men, acting alone, would do such a deed, but carried along by the collective feeling, the deed is executed. This is an evil consequence of group emotion. Think now, of some great evangelistic campaign, sweeping the continent, where righteous men and women, filled with the Spirit of God, operating under the sane religious fervour of the Christian Church are tearing down the strongholds of evil and making the community and commonwealth a better place in which to live and in which to rear their children, and you have an example of the group consciousness which is fostered by the Church.

The power of associated emotions is fundamental to the race. To suppress them would be to destroy mankind. They are as much a part of man as the involuntary muscular action by which he breathes. Feelings are older than reason, and deeper seated. The instinctive emotions are the great driving forces of life. The will may open the sluice-gates, but it is the instinctive emotions which make up the great flood which sweeps through the channel. Great ideas may sway masses of men, yet it is only when these ideas are associated with the instinctive emotions that the idea is charged with compelling power. These instinctive emotons give driving force to the will and put life into great ideas, and, being liberated, like the winds, burst forth, either to do their work of destruction or, if properly controlled by some powerful agency like the Christian Church, to speed up with full sails, on the voyage to the harbour of their destiny. Thus, reason may direct, what is in danger of becoming mob violence, into sublimation of character and into race-redeeming service. Now, the Church has the power of putting itself behind worthy motives which have been deliberately chosen and, through the principle of collective emotion, carrying society forward and upward to a higher and nobler plane.

The Church is the only institution in human society, whose sole purpose is to thus elevate man and bring him into a living acquaintance with God through Jesus Christ, his Saviour. Obviously then, the Church is a necessity. Other institutions may have good motives, but absolutely none are founded and exist for the unselfish purpose of saving sinners and edifying believers. The Church is necessary, even though it is not perfect. We might wish that the Church were perfect, but then you and I could not share its benefits, for we are not perfect. What position could you occupy in a perfect Church? Peter himself, deserted Jesus Christ in a crisis. The imperfect church is made up of imperfect members, but it is the best we have. It is indispensable because it binds together unworthy men in common worthy aspirations. We fall and rise and fall and rise again, but, as we stumble on together, following more closely day by day, the Master, and learning more intimately day by day, the lessons He would have us learn, we are able to encourage each other and bear each other's burdens. Our place is in the Church. We need the charitable judgement and cheer of others who are in it. Thus, by standing by one another in the Church, we mutually strengthen our firmness of purpose; we learn from others' failures and successes; we give to others who are in need; we cooperate for the promotion of the Kingdom of God upon earth and fit ourselves for that mansion in the Father's house, which is being prepared for us out of the spiritual timber which we are sending on ahead, from day to day, by the very lives which we live, here and now.

VIII

THE UNIQUE GUIDE

THE Bible is, preeminently, the book of salvation. It teaches us how God forgives our sins through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. This will be dealt with more fully in a later chapter. But the Bible is also the trustworthy guide or handbook for right living, and this is what we wish to emphasise at present. It teaches the science of manhood, with man-making and man-mending, and character building. It teaches the art of living with one's fellows in a just and charitable spirit. While the Bible is a revelation of the being and nature of God, while it justifies the way of God with men and spreads out like a rich map the whole realm of life here and hereafter, it still remains true that nine chapters out of every ten, are filled with homely precepts about right living, as to the best way to get safely out of this world and happily into the next. The New Testament might well be called the handbook to the science of full manhood. From this point of view the Bible is unique as to the teaching upon the art of right living. Great are the five fine arts! They bring the note of beauty into a career that is ofttimes ugly and squalid. Wonderful the contribution of the sciences! The science of stone and the science of the stars, and the science of matter and energy. But where all other arts end, the art of right living has its beginning, and when all other sciences have had their last word, the science of manhood begins its teaching. The Bible teaches us how to go through life without ever injuring one of our fellow-men. From it we receive skill to carry the intellect and memory, the judgement and imagination, the appetites, the ambitions and the love of office and honour, with such grace and mastery that our passing down the street is like a group of carol singers, whose melody is unmarred by discord.

Right living is not always easy. It is one thing for the lark to sing and for the eagle to soar, and each fulfils its whole career, but birds have a very slender equipment. Man enters the scene, big with destiny, made in the image of God as to all his faculties, and carrying eternity in his heart. Every-day merchants come into collision with their competitors; politicians, with their opposing plans, collide like railroad trains meeting in a head-on collision. Often a score of people struggle for the same office. What rivalries are involved! What jealousies are evoked! What malign hatreds follow in the track of life, just as an army on its march is followed by elements of disease and fire! It is one thing to sail a little pleasure craft upon a tiny lake, surrounded by mountains and sheltering trees that temper the wild blasts into a little ripple which ruffles the surface of that sapphire pool, but it is quite another thing to spread the sails for an ocean voyage in time of war, never knowing when the torpedo from the enemies' submarine will explode, and having no chart of hidden rocks or secret mines. Little wonder if the little yacht on the sequestered lake survives all loss, or that the other ship coming in from its ocean voyage, has gashed sides or torn sails and bent prow, after many a battle with lawless warriors. It is a great thing to have come through all the storms of life; to have survived the cyclones of passions and the weapons of secret hate, and to have gathered a great store of treasures of the soul in the hour when the captain of the ship has an abundant entrance into the long looked for harbour, and is greeted by the Pilot, face-to-face. Now the Bible is the chart for this life voyage, and its teaching marks the appointed trade routes, shows the dangerous channels, and teaches the captain how to set his compass by the eternal timepiece and how to steer by the star of hope.

But a textbook to right living is not, in itself, sufficient—man wants to be shown how to live the appointed life. Every noble student needs, not only the book, but the Master who embodies the book. Every young soldier is inspired by the presence of his brave general. The artist may linger long over the rules of the drawing, but when his favorite pupil still fell short, the master, Michael Angelo, entered the room while the pupil was still sleeping and alongside of the faulty figure, sketched the perfect face, and so taught by example. It is the glory of Jesus that He first lived the life for thirty years, and then described it in beautiful precepts. By ten thousand beautiful deeds, He familiarised the common people with courage, generosity, magnanimity, forgiveness of enemies and afterwards He put His example into parables and principles that would live after His earthly career was ended. He had an inexpugnable faith in the human soul. He appealed to the adventurous note in youth, and never once was disappointed with the response. The courage of Pilate's lion-hearted prisoner stirs the soul like the trumpet of Richard Coeur de Lion. Neither blows, nor threats, nor physical anguish could deflect the steps of Jesus from the path of obedience. His will had the strength of steel, and His purpose was as unyielding as granite, and yet His heart was so sensitive that it was touched to tears by the sight of human woe and pain. Strong, He was also gentle as giants are accustomed to be. Weakness is rough because it staggers. Gianthood is gentle, because it has resources equal to the task. What Jesus was as an ideal, every disciple can be. One half of His message to mankind was, "Believe in yourselves; reverence your own souls; remember that in commanding the task your heavenly Father commands the strength to perform it." A thousand times Jesus touched feeblings into the strength of heroes, and transformed drifters into the builders of states. In the fullest sense Jesus illustrated in His career every phase of the fine art of right living. He gives us the true method of maintaining just, kindly and charitable relations with our fellow pilgrims in the long life march across the continent of the years. This is why the Bible is so unique.

Other men create dissension and unhappiness by fixing their eyes upon the trivial trappings of life, such as humble clothes, poor dwellings, and obscure position. The tenements have their atmosphere and so have the avenues. Equipage, wealth, power may seem the exterior signs of an interior manhood but, from time to time, all signs fail. Homer wrote of palaces of ivory, had kings for his companions, loved to listen to the musical notes of Helen and Penelope, knew every corner in Circe's palace and every tree in the Garden of the

Hesperides, but no one would have suspected his intimacy with kings and queens in meeting the poet who was blind and led about by a child—a poet who slept under the sky with no blanket but the night wind, and often ate bread that was given him at the rear entrance of a rich man's house. Dante's native haunt was Paradise, and his closest friend was Beatrice, and oft walking across the grass he saw the flowers springing up beneath the feet of that ideal woman, whom he loved. But if you were to judge Dante by his daily life, you would have seen a man, a fugitive, hunted over the hills, sleeping in dens and caves of the earth, pursued by soldiers who sought the price set upon his head—a man, who, for years held heart-break at bay.

The golden Teacher of Galilee teaches us in the Bible that man must not be measured by the outward appearances. He Himself cannot be measured by His carpenter's bench. In their lifetime, the twelve disciples were laughed at as being mere fishermen, despised as wondering teachers and scorned because they were poor and plainly clad. Strange that the kings of thought and beauty and genius, who are revered today and whose names are associated with imperial palaces and gorgeous pageants, often lived in garrets during their lifetimes as did Michael Angelo and Leonardo; lived in hall bedrooms, as did Goldsmith and Samuel Johnson and even Shakespeare, during the days of his apprenticeship in London. When you judge Abraham Lincoln, you had better forget his log cabin. When you rate Wordsworth, you had better dismiss all thought about his humble little cottage at Grasmere. Many of the grandest souls that have ever walked our earth were despised. King Alfred, tending the cakes while the peasant woman ordered him about in the spirit of contempt, is a symbol and example of the danger of judging men by the exterior trappings. Test the mind and the heart, weigh the characters, remembering as the Bible plainly teaches, that with what measurement you mete, it shall be measured unto you again.

The Bible teaches us that it is no less unfair and unjust to judge man at his worst. John, in the hour of his Master's peril, followed afar off. That was John at his worst, and misrepresents the real John who was, despite appearances, a brave man at heart as he afterwards evidenced by a long life of warfare against sin and for the noblest kinds of right. How easy it is to be mistaken. Watch those boys struggling for a golden orange which a kind woman has tossed into their midst. One boy struggles like a little demon, pushes, strikes, kicks out with his feet and finally, getting his hands upon the golden fruit, tosses his competitors aside and dashes down the street like one possessed. What avarice in that boy! Alas for the day when he will stand in the market place and fight unto death for preeminence! But do not judge the boy at his worst. Follow him as he dashes into an apartment house a block away. Watch him as he rushes into a room where a little child lies ill. Notice with what excitement, mingled with tenderness, he tears that orange apart and places each golden piece upon the lips of a suffering little sister. It was not avarice that animated that boy struggling for the fruit. It was love and sympathy that drove him on. And when you have returned to soberness and confessed that you have misjudged his motives, and contempt has turned to admiration through wider knowledge of his motives, then remember that many a man on the street, who is making what seems to be a fight of greed and avarice in the spirit of the miser, may be moved and driven by the spirit of love. So judge not, that ye be not judged. Many a father who has been denied all privileges in his childhood, has resolved that his children shall have a chance; that they shall have leisure to grow ripe and an opportunity to become wise. How superficial our human judgement often is! And often how cruel!

Beehives are mostly made of wood and therefore are opaque. But once in a while a beehive is made of glass and, looking through, the observer traces the movements of all these hivers of honey. For his own purpose, God has hidden the soul of man behind tissues of muscle and skin. No man can read the hidden thoughts and hidden motives of his brother man. To you that brother is a book whose pages are locked, but unto God all the pages are open and the writing can be freely read. No judgement can be sound that is based upon ignorance. Many stinging criticisms that hurt like cruel whips would never be uttered had that human judge fully understood the secret thoughts and intents of the heart. Carlisle was cynical and even savage occasionally, but oh, remember the ninety-nine pages full of light and beauty. Browning was obscure and sometimes speaks with darkened words, but do not forget the hidden mines of pure gold in his writings. Burns did stumble and ofttimes over the same stone, but do not forget his better hours. Paul had his faults and also his crime, but do not rank Paul among the cruel and murderous. Be just. Be generous. Be tender. The teaching of the Old Testament Prophets and the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth are—let your judgement be tempered with love.

The portrait of Jesus given to us in the Gospel is very attractive. It reveals a great soul, unselfish, pure, resolute, with a spiritual eloquence which makes a tremendous appeal to everyone. In the Gospel portrait Jesus has solved for us the difficulty of attaining the proper poise between contrasted virtues. He possesses all the masculine features of strength and power, yet is gentle and beautiful in spirit. It is at once significant that there are four separate narratives of His life, His conduct, His teaching and His death upon the cross, and these were in circulation among the churches and in the world before the end of the century in which He was born. These four portraits bear a striking resemblance to each other and yet there are differences to be noted when they are carefully compared. The story is told of a certain French sculptor, who makes statues of famous Frenchmen for their friends. The room in which he works is circular. Around its circumference he has placed a number of cameras, all pointed toward the centre, so that when the man comes into the studio, all the lights are focused and, at a given signal, a photographic exposure is made. Photographs are thus made of the man from these different points of view, and from these photographs a statue or bust is made which could not be made so successfully from any one photograph. In like manner the evangelists have focused their cameras on the four sides of our Lord, and have given us a composite picture of His life which is, in reality, a full orbed portrait of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Whatever differences may be found in the narratives can be explained by this four-fold view.

After making every allowance for idealisation in the Gospels, we find that there still remains a Person, so pure, so noble and so inspiring as to satisfy every legitimate demand of the human mind. In all of the ancient manuscripts we find Matthew's account placed at the head of the Gospel record. It stands between the Old and the New Scripture writings, being the first book of the New. There are two very ancient accounts of the origin of Matthew's story which come to us from the Apostolic times. Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, in the first half of the second century, gives us one of these. Papias died A. D. 160. The other account is by Irenaeus, a presbyter, who was later Bishop of Lyons and who lived in the second half of the second century. Papias was acquainted with the Apostle John and his voice is therefore, one of authority. Papias says regarding Matthew's Gospel, "Matthew composed the discourses in the Hebrew tongue and everyone translated them as he was able." From Papias' words we learn that Matthew was the author of the first Gospel; that it was written originally in Hebrew and that it was translated in the early Christian church according to the ability of its members. Let us keep these three things in mind.

Irenaeus was the disciple of Polycarp who died a martyr for the cause of Christ. When he was asked to deny his Lord, or be thrown to the lions, he replied, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any wrong; how then can I deny my Lord and King?" He did not deny Him, but received the martyr's crown. This Polycarp was the teacher of Irenaeus who said of Matthew's Gospel, "Matthew also published the Gospel among the Jews in his own language." His language, as is known, was Hebrew. Matthew's message was primarily, to the Jews and its burden was: "Recognise Jesus as your Messiah, or prepare to meet Him as your judge." We cannot help but conclude that Matthew's Gospel is genuine and authentic.

Mark's picture of Jesus Christ was originally given to present Him to the Romans. He is set forth as the mighty worker of the manifest power of the Lord. It is the earliest of the Gospel stories. It might be called the Gospel of action, power and deeds, rather than words. There are few references to prophecy in Mark, because the Romans were not acquainted with the Old Testament. Christ is presented as a man of power, which would be bound to make its appeal to the Roman mind. Christ is portrayed as having power over nature; power to cast out demons, and to heal the sick, and power to raise the dead. Mark's Gospel declares the new power in human life—the power of faith. Who could have written this Gospel? Naturally it must have been written by one who had witnessed these wonderful manifestations of power. Once again we turn to Papias who said, "Mark, having been the amanuensis of Peter wrote down exactly all that he remembered of things either done or said by Christ." Now, an amanuensis is one who takes down the dictation of another. In modern times we call such a person a secretary. From Papias' words, then, we learn that mark was the secretary to the Apostle Peter and the Gospel of Mark would be, therefore, a compilation of the narratives of the Apostle Peter as he went about preaching to the various churches which he visited. As he journeyed from place to place, Peter used to relate the deeds of Jesus according to the needs of the people of that particular church, and when Mark came to put together these narratives, they were necessarily, fragmentary and incomplete. And this is to be attributed, not to the carelessness of the author, but to the circumstances under which the Gospel was written. Mark's Gospel is trustworthy.

Luke's portrait of Jesus Christ was meant, not so much for the Jews or the Romans, as for the Greeks, who idolised humanity. This is why Luke's Gospel is sometimes called the Gospel of the Humanity of Christ. Christ's genealogy is traced through Adam and not through Abraham or David. He is presented as the Son of Man and much is made of His birth, childhood and development. It is in Luke that we read, "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Of Luke, Irenaeus says, "Luke, the companion of Paul, put into writing the Gospel preached by the latter." Luke's Gospel was written, primarily, for the Gentiles, and stands in relation to Paul's ministry, much as that of Mark did to the ministry of Peter. Luke was the companion of Paul on many of the missionary journeys. Luke's Gospel is the most artistic of the four and would, therefore, make its appeal to the Greeks. Beginning with the calling of the four disciples by the Lake, there is a gradual unfolding of the Kingdom of the Redeemer, running through the experience of the calling of the remainder of the twelve, together with their mission, later the larger mission of the seventy and so, in all of it, we see how the work of Jesus developed and grew as Jesus Himself grew into manhood. Luke proclaims that salvation is free and universal. It too, is a thoroughly reliable narrative.

John wrote his Gospel for those who had the other three already in their hands. Its purpose was to portray the Deity of our Lord, together with the deeper meaning of His life and mission. Several accounts of the fourth Gospel come down to us from Christian antiquity, which assure us that it was written by the Apostle John in Asia Minor in the latter part of John's life. It was written at the request of the Bishops of the Churches in Asia Minor and of some of John's own colleagues. We are also assured that when John wrote it he had before him the three earlier Gospel narratives which had been in circulation in the churches for years. This four-fold portrait is the only legacy our Lord has left with us, outside of His peace. It is quite sufficient for our needs.

When the Gospels are considered together with the rest of the Scriptures, we find that the Bible constitutes a most admirable introduction to God, intended to lead sincere souls into personal relations with him through Jesus Christ, who alone can save them from sin. It also furnishes them with a unique guide along the pathway of the more abundant life here and hereafter. The Bible is a book to live by. Our chief concern with it is to make use of it. To do this, one may or may not, be a scholar. Many great scholars have studied the Bible superficially, because they have failed to put it to practical use, and any study of the Bible that fails to put it to practical use is superficial. On the contrary, many unlearned men have brought forth out of the Bible very profound truths, because they have put the Bible into practical every-day use.

There is much superstitious usage of the Bible. I have visited homes where the Bible is kept lying upon the mantelpiece, covered with dust and never used except when some important issue is to be decided. Then the Bible is taken down and opened at random, and the first line one's eyes fall upon is expected to reveal the divine approval or disapproval of the undertaking. I have read of a lady who had an old garment which she thought should be either turned inside out or dyed. Which should it be? "Well," said she, "I'll let the Bible decide it." So, opening the Bible at random, her eyes fell upon the line where it is written, "Turn ye, O turn ye, for why will ye die." For her the matter was settled. Her Bible had given directions in no uncertain terms. For some people the Bible is kept in the house merely as a symbol of good luck, much as the ranchers of the middle west hang a horseshoe above the door for good luck. They never read or study the Bible but regard it as a kind of charm against misfortune. Obviously, the Bible was not intended for such purposes.

The Bible is not a scientific textbook; it is not a charm against misfortune; it is a book of morals, a book to live by, an infallible guide to faith and practise. But God revealed nothing in the Bible that men can find out for themselves. If men would know geology, let them study the rocks. If men would know physiology, and history and astronomy, let them study the human body, monuments, and the stars. The Bible tells us that God is righteous; that He demands righteousness in His children; that He will help them to be righteous by forgiving them for Christ's sake; and that He will guide them by His Spirit into the way of all truth. What the heavens could not declare as to the great all-forgiving, all-loving, heart of God—that the Bible reveals. And never once has this book of hope and comfort, this book of medicine and mercy, this book for the peasant and the slave, as well as for the rich and the prosperous, been wrong. It warned Esau as to the betrayal of his birthright. It warned young Saul as to the misuse of his divine gifts. It warned David and coerced him. Today it confronts the broken-hearted and the lost. The poor go towards this book as pilgrims toward a fountain in the desert. Ultra-conservatives try to take care of the Bible by defending it, but it no more needs their defence than gravity or spring or harvest time. The sun can take care of itself and is in no peril from anything or anyone. Why then worry because President Harper thought that there were two documents in the book of Genesis? Read Genesis for yourself and see. The important thing in the book of Genesis is the assertion of God at the heart of things. If Genesis leads you to that faith, so that you direct your life accordingly, then it has done its work for you. Why worry because Professor Driver thought there were two Isaiahs? If the sixth chapter of Isaiah and the fortieth chapter of Isaiah teach you the tremendous fact that the Lord God Almighty is with men, why worry about how many men wrote them? The important thing is that you should get acquainted with him and direct your life accordingly. Why worry because Professor Robertson thought that the Song of Solomon was a drama, bound, by error, into the Old Testament? If your mother misspells a word in a letter from home, full of love and tenderness, does the error in orthography vitiate your love for your mother and the home ties? There is a human element in the Bible and that shares in human frailty, and there is a divine element in the Bible, and that deals with man's relation to God, and this holds out mercy, love, right and truth.

But there is a radicalism also that is false, impractical, and untrue. Every generation holds a few of these earnest dreamers who love to sharpen an axe, and are always looking for something that they can chop down. Now they appear in the realm of policies, as did Karl Marx, writing: "Working men! Remember your two enemies are God and religion. We do not conceal our ultimate aim, which is to overthrow, by physical force, if necessary, all existing political institutions." Sometimes this false radicalism appears in the family, under the name of Tolstoy, who wanted to be a peasant but lived in a fine house and entertained his guests with fine lace, and cold bird and champagne, while he ate pea soup, drank cold water and went barefoot. Sometimes the false radicalism appears in the realm of reform, as in that orator who used to go up and down the country talking about the mistakes of Moses, but quite overlooked the fact that the Ten Commandments of Moses are the very substance of all modern law codes, and that his domestic, hygienic and moral rules underlie the whole modern regime, until it seemed that this man was out with an axe, trying to chop down every fruit-bearing orchard in the world, instead of killing the caterpillars' nests that there might be an abundance of apples and peaches, and pears for children and tired workers. It is the office of the husbandman to prune the decayed bough, feed the roots of the vine and place new grafts into the bough. Oh, how heavy the losses society has sustained through its mistaken radicals! How grievous the burdens that have been loaded upon the people by false conservatives! How fragmentary in their life and thought, these two types of leaders, and how sublime the figure of Jesus still stands forth, at once the ideal progressive and the ideal conservative, throwing away the chaff, preserving the wheat, depending upon the spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit to lead Him into all truth.

For Jesus, the Bible was the book of the soul. So it should be for us. He was familiar with the Old Testament law and prophecies and was Himself the fulfilment of those prophecies. He recommends the Bible to us and bids us search its pages, and apply its truths to our lives. The Bible is the unique guide which introduces us to God and his will for our lives through Jesus Christ who died for our sins on Calvary's cross in order that we might enjoy the blessings of life eternal.

IX

THE GREAT INFECTION

HAVE you ever seen the picture of the Plague landing in Europe? Death, the boatman, is a gaunt figure with fleshless face and arms and streaming, straight hair; the frightened sailors on the wharf flee in horror. The plague, which so often ravaged Europe, was imported from the East. It was born at river mouths, in marshy flats. Cholera came from the delta of the Ganges, plague from the delta of the Nile. In the fourteenth century, twenty-five millions of people in Europe were swept away by the plague. Now sin is the great infection. By calling sin an infection we mean that humanity was not created in a diseased or mortgaged condition, but that sin, coming from without, fastened itself like a parasite upon our humanity. It was communicated by the great adversary of the soul, whose very presence taints, poisons, corrupts all upon which he breathes. If sin is not infection from without, but a constituent part of our humanity, then there is little hope of relief here or hereafter.

The great infection was born at a river's mouth in the land of Eden, in which delta man's act of disobedience brought the curse upon the race. Wherever man is to be found, sin has infected his life. The power that can wage successful battle against this scourage of evil is found only at the foot of the cross of Christ. A supernatural remedy is needed. The most vigorous disinfection carried on by earth against this plague has never stamped it out. Some years ago great forest fires swept through the timberland on the western coast of our continent. Every year mankind is fire-swept by the flames of evil and not one soul remains altogether untouched by the blackening hand of the enemy of the soul. Not a single department of our nature is as perfect as it would have been, had there been no infection. The beauty of humanity is that of the rose which has held a worm in the bud; of a garden over which the ruthless feet of an invader has passed; of a harp, more than half of whose strings have been broken; of music marred by discord. To ignore the plain facts of the ravages of sin will not help us at all. The deathcart of the plague stricken cities, so vividly described by DeFoe, is no more real than the results of sin. The wages of sin is death. The infection has touched man's soul, man's body, society and nature.

Man's soul is invaded. We were created in the image of God. Our God-given powers are not removed by sin, but they are disorganised and in mutiny. We still love and hate, and choose and refuse. But the infection leads us to love what God hates, and to hate what God loves. We choose what God refuses, and refuse what God chooses. We have not been longing for what reason says is best, and often desire that which reason condemns. Conscience utters its warning in vain to the riotous senses which delight in revelry. The centre of life is first attacked by the infection. This does not, for a moment, mean to imply that there is no goodness at all in humanity, and no aspirations after the better things, but that the soul is deluded again and again into choosing what God would refuse.

Man's body is invaded. In cases where sin has led to dissipation, the body shows the excesses. How much the body has suffered through the infection God only knows. Pride, anger, covetousness, despair, register themselves on the human face. The windows of our souls are soiled through the pollution of evil. There are faces wondrously fair, but they are not what they would have been had sin not touched the race. Those who know, can see the disorders of the human body, the finger marks of direct or indirect sin. Death itself, is the final result of the infection.

Society has been invaded. Society is but the sum total of individual units, and if the infection is in all the parts, it will be in the whole. Casual consideration will make evident the fact that some disorganising, paralysing power has touched society. Poverty and hunger; crime and intemperance; greed and graft; bitter competition and cold unbrotherliness;—all the woes of our social organism by which men are made wicked, hungry and degraded, so that crimes are condoned and evil protected—all may be traced back to the great infection of sin.

Nature has been invaded. The curse of man's transgression fell upon nature and many of her best pictures were broken. This is not the doctrine that matter is evil, but that its infelicities and convulsions came through man's sin. There is a close connection between man and nature. It is the outermost wrapping of man's soul and has shared with him the great infection. The curse upon nature came for man's sake; its catastrophies because of man's sin. We see this clearly in the Flood, in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the plagues of Egypt. Biblical scholars like George Adam Smith, F. Godet and Horace Bushnell, do not hesitate to say that there is a moral sympathy between man and the earth he inhabits. "Man is the soul of the world." It has been desolated because of sin. The conduct of the human race has affected and infected the physical life of the universe to its farthest limits in space. Paradise is turned into a desert through man's sin and only through forgiveness the desert becomes Paradise. The guilt of man is far-reaching indeed, and corrupts the place he inhabits. The world has groaned and wept because of its infection due to man's sin. Dr. Bushnell points out that the whole family of words in "de" and "dis" have to do with the consequences of sin-deformity, degradation, disorder, discord, etc. This is very significant and agrees with Paul's statement that, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together." The earth, which was pronounced "very good" as it came from the hands of the Great Creator, has met frightful disaster and has become abnormal. It is cursed for man's transgression. No one can question the infelicities of nature. She is red in tooth and claw. Do you doubt the reality of sin? I point you to this four-fold infection.

Jesus had a great deal to say about sin. It not only was the dark background of His sinlessness and the enemy which He came to conquer, but in direct teaching, He tore off the hideous mask from the arch-enemy of man's soul. In casual reference as well, He declared man's sin, as in the saying, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children."

He taught that the sin of sins was the rejection of the light, leading to unbelief in the Son of God.

In "The Ethics of Jesus," Dr. Stalker shows that Christ has given a very exhaustive treatment of three notorious forms of sin, each of which lay like a burden upon His pure spirit. They are the sin of the publican, the sin of the Pharisee, the sin of the Sadducee. The publican's sin was the transgression of the flagrant sinner and was grouped with that of the harlot in the designation, "publicans and sinners." The attitude of Jesus to open transgressors was surprisingly generous. His pure nature revolted against their sin, and His treatment was not insensibility to their condition, but an appeal to the blurred side of their nature to throw off the incubus of shame. The Pharisee's sin was more subtle and more dangerous, more culpable and more regrettable. Jesus vehemently attacked their inhumanity and their hypocrisy. They were corrupt at heart, yet outwardly religious. Arrogance and pride took the place of the sins of the flesh in their alienation. He said the sins of the Pharisees were worse than those of the outcasts and harder to reach. The Sadducee's sin was the denial of the resurrection and the assertion of worldliness. The love of this present world, with blindness for spiritual realities, led to a spirit of looking at things that was altogether materialistic.

The essence of the three types of sin was, self-will, choosing the lesser in the presence of the greater, the lower in sight of the higher. The sin need not be that of immorality, to be condemned by Incarnate Love. It may be pride, or inhumanity, or sheer worldliness. The Scriptural words for sin include lawlessness, transgression or disobedience, but also, to miss the mark, to hear amiss, and a discord in the harmonies of the universe. A man may be a sinner without being impure or a blasphemer. One of the very ancient interpretations of the passage concerning the woman taken in adultery, who was brought before Jesus by her self-righteous accusers, declares that the Master stooped down and wrote in the dust the sins of each of them, and when they beheld the accusation, they all went away. Were the sins written the sins of grosser iniquity such as murder, robbery, sensuality, drunkenness? No, they were the sins of temperament-sullenness, vindictiveness, peevishness, jealousy, bad temper, pride; sins of neglect—the letters left unwritten, the words of kindness left unspoken, the opportunities unavailed.

Not otherwise is it with us. Before we decide that we do not fall within the range and scope of being sinners, simply because we may not be guilty of the more flagrant violations of the law of God, such as unchastity or dishonesty, let us be certain that we know just exactly what is meant by sin from the standpoint of Jesus Christ. How much more prevalent are the sins of temperament, involving arrogance, bad temper, vindictiveness, etc.; how much more harm they really do; how much more hidden evil they actually reveal than even the sins of passion! In Jesus' greatest parable, the prodigal represents the sins of passion and, ruinous as they are, he did come home again. But the elder brother represents the sins of temper. With the prodigal home, the house alight, music playing, dancing on, the father begging him to join the rejoicing company, it is written of the elder brother that "he was angry and would not go in." Bad temper, sullen, bitter—

that, as Jesus saw, keeps many people from the Father's house more hopelessly than do the sins of passion.

Again, let us consider the sins of neglect. It is not alone the things we do, but the things we leave undone, that haunt us. How insistently Jesus stressed the importance of this type of evil! What was the matter with the man who hid his one talent in the napkin? What did he do? That was the trouble. He did nothing; he just missed his chance. What was the trouble with the Priest and the Levite who left the victim on the road? What did they do? That was just the trouble. They did nothing; they went by on the other side. Sins of the flesh, sins of temperament, sins of spiritual blindness and neglect—I suppose there are others, but it seems as though these ought to take in the most of us and make us feel the need of deliverance from the great infection.

Everything beautiful exists in the world in spite of the great infection. Every religious impulse everywhere in the world comes from the Spirit of God striving within man's heart. The light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world has shone whereever its rays have not been shut out by the sins of men. In administering the remedy, God begins where the infection began, namely, in the soul of man. The remedy is not a tonic or a rebuke, but a new creation through Christ's atonement for sin. Sin is more than infelicity and an infirmity. It is a serious alienation of the soul from God. To bandage a broken limb without setting it, is foolishness. The ship on the sand bar of transgression must be floated off by the supernatural tide of grace. The infection of sin must have a more radical treatment than a treatment for infection from disease.

When, for instance, the diphtheria germ invades the human organism, a serum is created within the human body to fight the germ. Antitoxin is given to increase the forces of the serum in the battle against the infection.

Grace is more than assistance given to the soul in fighting its battle; more than reenforcement for an almost defeated army. We are made new creatures in Christ Jesus through grace. The inspiration of the divine life checks the power of the great infection. God is glad of every struggle which the soul makes to resist the dread invader, but He gives the new dynamic within the soul. The remedy at once moves outward to the last of the concentric circles of our life, from soul to body, from body to society, from society to nature, a radical change takes place in our loves, our hates and our ambitions. Now there is unity, harmony and conformity to the will of God. The reestablishment of the will of God in the soul that had revolted from Him, has taken place miraculously. It is the rebirth of the soul. The human body registers the change, and although a thing of dust, carries within it the promise of a glorious resurrection; the reign of Christ has already begun in human society, and nature, which shared in the infection, is too blessed in the restitution. The regenerated man is a new creature in a new universe.

But let us now consider the difficulty of restoring the infected soul to health by forgiving sin. We some times get the idea that it is easy to forgive sin. No, it is hard to forgive sin. Hard for us, hard for Christ. Jesus once said, "Which is easier to say, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, arise and walk?" You plainly see what the Master implies here. The man to whom

He was speaking was sick with the palsy, which was considered to be an incurable disease. Yet it is easier for Him to cure a man who is suffering from an incurable disease, than to forgive his sins. At first this sounds strange coming from Jesus. Possibly we think it easy for Jesus to forgive. He said so many wonderful things about forgiveness and exhibited it so beautifully in His life. He made forgiveness forever memorable on the cross. But no, it was hard for even Jesus to forgive. And that is as it should be. Here is a lesson we modern people ought to learn.

Why was it hard for Jesus to forgive sin and restore the soul to health? First of all, because Jesus took sin seriously. It is easy to condone sin or to try to excuse it, but for one who really takes sin seriously it is hard to forgive. Suppose you were a specialist on Oriental rugs. You admire them, love them; then suppose you saw some "roughneck" deliberately ruin one, brutally, wantonly destroy the matchless fruit of the loom, which you knew to be worth a small fortune! Would it be easy to forgive that? Another man, who could not tell Oriental rugs from door mats, would find it easy to excuse the deed; to pass it by. But for you, an expert in rugs, to say, "forgive them for they know not what they do," would not be easy, because you take rugs seriously.

You can go to the theatre any night and hear sin condoned, made light of, or excused. But, for the person who takes sin seriously it is hard to forgive. Whenever you hear anyone speaking light-heartedly about forgiveness, as though it were an easy matter, you may be sure of one thing; he is not forgiving it, he is making light of it and that is altogether another matter. To excuse sin is easy. To forgive sin is hard. There are two kinds of mothers in the world today. The one kind has no moral seriousness. She has an instinctive maternity for her offspring such as a bird has for her fledglings. When the son of such a mother becomes a prodigal, or a daughter goes astray and wallows in the mud, that mother will receive the offspring again, condoning the sin, saying that it is no worse than thousands of others have done. But some of us had mothers who never could have received us in that way. They would have forgiven us and received us, but it would have been a very serious matter for both of us. They would have borne on their own hearts the outrage of our sin as though they had committed it themselves. They would have gone with vicarious steps, to the very portals of any hell we might have entered, and there, grief-stricken, would have waited for us to come out. They would have put themselves in our place, felt the burden of our guilt upon their innocence. Forgive us, yes, they would have truly forgiven us, but it would have turned their hair grey and borne their shoulders down with grief. That is what true forgiveness means. It is hard.

In the next place, Jesus found it hard to forgive sin because He loved people. But, you say, His love for people made it easy to forgive their sins. No, you miss the point. When you love someone dearly, and someone else's sin hurts the one you love, that sin is hard to forgive. Jesus was exceedingly severe on the Scribes and Pharisees. What is the reason? The reason is clearly revealed in verses like this; "Beware of the scribes—they that devour widows' houses and, for a pretense, make long prayers." Jesus was thinking of the widows and what the robbery of the rulers did to them. His own mother was a widow. He knew what it was for a woman to be left with a large family of children. On a number of occasions in His ministry, a widow appears, and on each occasion, His special gentleness overflows. When He wanted to portray need in one of His parables, He draws a picture of a widow pleading with an unjust judge. When He is harsh in His denunciation of the scribes therefore, in all probability, there was the figure of His widowed mother in the background of His thought. "They that devour widows' houses." That is what made it hard to forgive. He was very severe with Dives, because He was thinking of Lazarus, whom He loved. He was hard on the priest and levite, because He was thinking of the poor victim by the roadside. When you care for people it is hard to forgive those who have sinned against them.

Forgiveness of sin is nothing short of a miracle. Emerson said, "You can no more have sin without punishment, than you can have positive electricity at one end of a needle without negative electricity at the other end." But when you face Christ, you face one whose plummet reaches to the very bottom of sin. Nobody ever took sin so seriously; nobody ever hated it so for what it did to people, yet He forgives sin and that is a miracle. He practises forgiveness so marvellously in His life and all down through the Christian centuries, the marvellous good news of the Gospel is the fact that men and women have been reclaimed by pardon to a reestablished fellowship with God. There is a mercy side to God. He forgives, and that is a miracle. Never take this fact lightly.

Again, it was hard for Christ to forgive sin, because forgiveness is such a terrific experience for the one who experiences it. You say, Now I know that you don't know what you are talking about. Why, it is a glorious thing to be forgiven. Does not David speak of the joy of forgiveness? Friend, if you say that lightly, then I am sure of one thing—you never have had your sins forgiven. To wrong somebody, to be alienated from that person, to be ashamed of yourself, then to be forgiven and restored to his friendship and to be trusted by him again—that is the most humiliating experience that any self-respecting man can pass through. If there were any other way around it, surely it would be found out. Forgiveness does one thing and one thing only. It does not take away the fact of sin, it does not take away the memory of sin, it cannot take away the consequences of sin. All forgiveness does is to reestablish the old personal relationship which existed before the sin was committed. Now, to have been alienated, and then restored to favour through forgiveness, is just about the most searching ordeal that the human soul can pass through. This is exactly what the cross of Christ means in the Christian life. It means that forgiveness was not easy. It was hard. It was costly, even for God. Now everything that we have said at this vesper hour has led up to this one climatic fact; either your sin has been forgiven you, or else it remains in you still as sin. This is the most solemn fact in human life.

But do not take it from me, merely because I am a Gospel minister. Go to the physician; go to the psychologist. They are telling us each day that most of the cases of mental derangement of a functional nature are due to the sense of guilt. Then, when all the testimony of the wise men and the scientists is in, and you sit down alone with yourself, you also know that it is true. Either your sin has been forgiven you, or it is still in you as sin. We realise this the most when we are at our best. Amid the whirl of frivolity and the glare of the "White Way," we forget our unforgiven sins, we lock them out of our lives for the time being. Then the finer hours return, and we realise that unforgiven sin is still with us because it is unforgiven.

Every Gospel minister, who takes his job seriously, cannot look out over a fine assemblage of young people, such as we have here, without thinking of the many unadvertised needs which must exist in your young, energetic lives. Who can sum them up in their infinite variety? But the greatest need of all, is the need of being restored to right relationship with God. There is only one way—penitence, confession, forgiveness, and blessed is that person who has been cleansed of the great infection of sin, and who faces life fit for the Master's use.

X

VICARIOUS FRIENDSHIP

THE problem of friendship is the problem of life itself. "He who has learned to love—and only he—has learned to live." The highest and finest office in the world is that of friendship. It has wrought more permanent value than any other office held by mankind. The office of friendship is not merely the pleasure of two or more people being together, but has a purpose far surpassing that of merely being in each other's company. "The office of a friend," says Emerson, "is to make us do what we can." In this lies the true significance of the friendship of Jesus. His friendship is forever appealing to us to make us to become more like Himself. The friendship of a great heart is the finest challenge in human experience. When Mrs. Browning asked Charles Kingsley to tell her the secret of his life, that she might make hers beautiful, he replied, "I had a friend."

There is a moral power in friendship that holds us more firmly than anything else in the world. Certain elements must enter into the friendship to make it powerful. Jesus presents these elements in His life. They are humility, sincerity, appreciation and open-mindedness. With these elements as a basis, souls just naturally gravitate toward one another. The unnatural sinks into oblivion. Each teaches and is teachable. Teachableness is the natural attitude of the sincere soul toward all good. The fact of exchange for the good of another is one of the great elements in the religion of Jesus. His religion can function in and through us only when we adopt its basic principles. Exchange for the advantage of others is applicable to all conditions of life.

However perfectly the elements of friendship are developed in the life of Jesus, they are necessarily very rudimentary in our lives. Our tendencies are in the opposite direction. Our identification and friendliness too frequently seek for those who are congenial to us and who are selfish like ourselves. These are the most common elements in the world, but they are disastrous both to civilisation and to religion. On the contrary, Jesus appears actually to love men, and to love them so that they leave their all to be in the friendship of the Man, who so thoroughly identified Himself with them that, in the eyes of the world, He could not be distinguished from His fellows. Is it not true that the cultured avoid the uncultured; that the educated are bored by the ignorant; that the rich look down upon the poor and that nobody would ever know a Christian by his attitude toward the uncultured, the ignorant and the poor? After nearly two thousand years of influence radiating from the life of Christ, we not only continue to maintain this unnatural attitude, but we courageously seek to justify it on moral grounds, when both the attitude and the grounds are fundamentally immoral.

There are race cleavages, religious cleavages, and cleavages in society. People of different races dislike each other, so that race antagonism is one of the gravest problems of our times. It is also so in the matter of religion. The different communions are not as friendly to one another as they should be. Society is rigid in its lines as to who is who. These great cleavages are here. They present grave obstacles to progress, but they are not impossibilities; instead they are challenges to us to rise to the level of Christ's way of living, and thereby make a unification of all the moral and spiritual forces of the world into a normal humanity, until the life of God is reflected in the lives of the least of the multitudes of all the nations. The good will visits of our own Colonel Lindbergh, and the more recent visit of the British Prime Minister to the United States are very wholesome signs.

Isolation is a contradiction of the spirit of Jesus. A culture or an education or a religion which isolates itself is a denial of Jesus. Identifications and friendships are the equipments by which His religion is made powerful on the earth. The fact of the matter is, that culture owes a debt to the uncultured; education owes a debt to the ignorant; wealth owes a debt to poverty; and religion owes a debt to irreligion. We send out a few missionaries in the persons of teachers and social workers, but that method will never bring the world to the standard of Christ. The cultured, the educated and the religious have no more moral right to run away into isolation with their culture, their education and their religion, than they have to run away with the money of the poor and the needy. That which we have must be spent by us personally for those who have it not. There is no other way of making real the religion of Jesus Christ. The fact is that culture, education and religion are all on a fictitious basis, however unwilling we are to acknowledge it. We are literally haunted by the notion of trying to get up and keep up. But science has done away with the terms, up and down. In the days of the astrologers, these terms had meaning according to the theories that were in vogue; but after Copernicus and Galileo and Kepler made their discoveries, the terms, up and down, had no significance whatever. What is up at one hour of the day is down at another hour. These elevations and depressions in culture, education and religion are likewise fictitious. Jesus did away with them long ago. All are down who are not on His level, and all who stand on His level are constantly giving their culture to the uncultured, their education to the uneducated, their wealth to the poor, and their religion to those who know not Christ. The accumulation of what we have, be it culture, wealth, education or religion, is for the benefit of others. If it is not so used, it is misused.

One of the purposes of the life of Christ upon earth was to keep forever before us the living plan of identification and friendship. It is the lesson of the Incarnation and the cross. All tendencies otherwise are toward paganism, which involves us in grave entanglements, without Christ's power of untangling. Isolation is the cause of great ruptures, whether in the field of religion, politics, sociology or economics. Unqualified identification is the method of Jesus, and unqualified identification must be our method if we are to follow His manner of living. He completely and unreservedly identified Himself with sinful humanity and bore our sins upon the cross in our stead. Whatever theory of the Atonement you may hold, you must recognise this fact; behind all the explanations of the Atonement that have risen and taken form and faded away, in the history of Christian thought, this conviction has lain deep—the cross means that Jesus Christ identified Himself with sinful humanity and, at a terrible cost, paid the price for our redemption.

The picture of Jesus crucified in the midst of the multitude is still with us. Are we able to be His disciples? It not only means bearing a cross; but, in its accomplishment, we must come to such revolution in our thinking and attitudes, that the world will discover that Jesus is living in the lives of His disciples. The world has not yet seen it; it wants to see it for the world wants to see God. Incarnation is identification. Jesus is an instance; Christianity is a multiplication of instances. This multiplication must continue until "the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ."

Before considering any further the effect of the cross upon man, let us inquire what effect the cross of Christ has had upon God. Did Christ's death on Calvary make God a different God? Did it make God more lenient toward the sinner? Did it make God more considerate of you and me, who live since the days of Calvary, than he was toward the part of the race that lived before the crucifixion? Had the crucifixion of Christ any effect upon God? We have just been arguing that the death of Christ paid the price for our redemption. Probably that has no meaning any more today. There was a time when prisoners were released from jail because other persons took their place in jail. But that will no longer work. The law of the land will no longer permit it. Just last week the newspapers of our city carried accounts of a man who hired another man to serve his prison term in the Federal prison at Leavenworth, Kansas, and the deception was not discovered until the proxy had served a considerable part of the term. The result is that the original offender must serve his full term, even though the proxy has already served a considerable portion of the time. There may also be further penalties, because the law says it is not fair for one man to pay the penalty for another man's offences. Is it fair, then, that God should suffer for our sins?

A true story which has fallen under my actual observation may help. A young man who was employed in a bank, had gone wrong and was sentenced to a penal institution. After some months he was paroled, but no one trusted him. He had a police record. No one would recommend him. His former employer said, "I will give the young man another chance." He took him back into his bank, and gave him even a better position. After some months he was discovered at his old tricks. He had betrayed his trust. His benefactor was resentful. There was bitterness in his heart. Being a Christian, the benefactor attempted to pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," but the words stuck in his throat. He ceased leading in prayer publicly. The young man—the only support of his widowed mother—was tried and sent to jail. Later on the mother fell sick and was desperately in need. The young man's former employer heard of the need and his heart was deeply touched and pained. He went to the widow's home and, upon discovering her condition, provided food and coal and clothing. He also called in a physician and ordered him to attend to her at his expense until she was well. He realised how keenly the widow-mother had suffered because of the son's wrong and forgave the son for the mother's sake. Now he attends prayer-meeting regularly again and prays in public, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." At sacrifice and costly kindness, he was led into the spirit of forgiveness. Not otherwise, God has, for Christ's sake, forgiven our sins. Jesus prayed, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," and Jesus is just like God. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Every time I sin it pains God, and produces suffering akin to the suffering of Christ on Calvary. Is this then, not a challenge to me to hate and turn from sin, which means pain to God? How can I do otherwise than turn from it when I know that God will welcome me back into his good favour, just as the prodigal son was welcomed? In other words, Jesus Christ identified Himself with sin for me, and bore my sin on the cross. Now, God has, for Christ's sake, forgiven my sin. The great forgiving heart of God, which was living out its own nature on the cross—since God was in Christ—was touched and pained and gives perpetual expression to itself in the spirit of forgiveness. You say, you cannot fully understand it. That is why we say forgiveness is a miracle. The sacrificial spirit of forgiveness is eternal in the heart of God, and Calvary is the supreme expression of the infinite heart of infinite Love.

From man's point of view, the atonement has resulted in restoring the friendship between God and man. The very heart of the atonement is the reconciliation of man to God, or, as we might say, the renewal of the friendship between God and man, which was broken off through sin. There are at least five reasons why a person might not be friendly with another person. He might be ignorant of the other person's existence; he might be disinterested in the other person's life; he might feel that the other person is above him and therefore have nothing to do with him; he might feel that he is above the other person, and therefore has no need of him; or, he may be at enmity with the other person because of some injury committed. Anything coming between these two persons, which makes for forming friendship, is a work of reconciliation, and this is exactly what the cross does. It reconciles man to God. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." You have visited a strange city and passed through its streets without recognising anybody. You have no interest in the people on the streets, because you do not know them. Possibly you bear the same relation to God. You move about in this beautiful world-house—this universe which is God's physical body. He is present in the lily of the field, in the bird in the branches, in the babbling brook, in the snow-capped mountain, in the sunshine, the stars of night, and the little child that plays on the lawn, but you were not looking for God. His presence was not real to you, because you did not think that he existed in the things all about you. Then the cross looms up in the path ahead of you, compelling attention, and the words, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," come to you with new meaning. "Can it be possible that the Almighty God and Creator of the universe is interested enough in me," you say, "to place these beautiful surroundings before me, and is He as deeply concerned for my welfare as Jesus was, when

He died upon the cross?" Then it dawns upon you that God is more than all-powerful and all-wise. He is tender, merciful, kind and forgiving as Jesus. And so the cross reconciles us to God.

If you are to make a friend of a stranger, there must be something of mutual interest brought to the attention of both of you for friendship involves mutual interests. Possibly you never thought that God was interested in the things that interest you. You say, "He must be so occupied with the matter of guiding the celestial bodies, so that they do not collide with each other and work havoc in the universe, that He has no time even to notice the trifling cares that encumber the individual." Surely God would not trust men, for men do not even trust one another. Then the cross looms up again. You remember that Jesus was interested in the affairs of men. He went about doing good unto men, and died for men, and "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." Here again is evidence that God is not too consistently employed with the other affairs of the universe to notice your needs and desires. He really trusts you—perhaps more than you trust yourself—and comes more than halfway to meet you in constructive friendship. So the "love of Christ constraineth us," if we are honest-minded to realise that God is interested in us, and we yield ourselves to Him and become friendly toward Him. We are reconciled to Him.

In our human society, even in democratic America, we find many class distinctions. The upper classes very often have little dealings with the lower classes. Possibly you have inferred that God too, is an aristocrat. In the Old Testament He is represented as "high and lifted up." He is often spoken of as being too holy to look upon the things of sinful men. Then the cross confronts you again, and on it you behold Him who is one with God, even Jesus Christ, who identified Himself with us. What significence has this? It signifies that the very least of all God's erring children are as welcome in the company of the Heavenly Father as the prodigal was welcomed home. It means that just as a loving father pitieth his erring children, so God pitieth them that reverence Him. It means that we may be the actual friends of God, and He does not consider Himself better than we are, if we repent of our sins and obey Christ's commandments. This is reconciliation—atonement.

Man feels very self-sufficient these days. The many discoveries and inventions have made him very independent. He has so completely throttled the forces of nature that he can outfly the eagle in his aeroplane, he can outswim the fish in his submarine, outrun the fleet-footed deer in his automobile. He can talk around the world in but a few minutes and can hear the music played on the opposite side of the sphere at the same second it is produced. Maybe man has made such rapid strides that he is no longer in need of a God to help him. Then the cross comes to our attention once more. We remember that He who was so willing to help man physically, as He went up and down the roads of Palestine, told them that it was necessary for Him to die and rise again from the dead in order that they might have the greater blessings of the eternal life, and again we are reconciled to God through the cross of Christ.

Sin has its attractiveness. There is pleasure in sin for a season. If people actually are to turn from sin, it will be because of genuine repentance. If we truly repent, there must be some inciting cause. True repentance will then revolutionise our lives. We will cease to do evil and learn to do well, and God who is faithful and just, will forgive us our sins. Here again, the cross comes into function. It reveals to us on the one hand, the awfulness of sin and on the other hand, the beauty and the mercy and the love of a forgiving God, and the sincere soul just naturally finds himself friendly toward God.

The cross of Christ is the tallest mountain-peak on the continent of the years. It still towers magnificently over the wrecks of time. It is the most significant fact in history. It means that all evil ceases in God, whose infinite love and tender mercy is revealed to us through Christ, who identified Himself with sinful humanity and suffered for our sins in order that we might be restored to full friendship with God. It means that every time we sin it pains God Who, in Jesus, suffered the consequences of our sin and, for Jesus' sake, forgives us our sins. God suffers the loss occasioned by our sins, buries the shame in his own heart, and welcomes the repentant prodigal back to his arms of love, putting him in a place of happiness and service.

A short time ago a journalist offered an editorial on the Christian symbol of the cross, which ran as follows: "As a symbol, the Christian cross compares poorly with the crescent of Mohammed. The slender arc of the new moon has in it the element of hope, it will wax into a great and glowing orb. But the cross can only suggest torture and death. There is no cross or blood in the teaching of Confucius or Buddha, and a religion featuring an instrument of torture for its superiority, makes slow progress in heathen minds. A real Reformation would restore the living Christ, banish the cruel cross and take for its guidance the shining star. Did not the three Wise Men say, 'We have seen His star in the East and are come to worship Him?' "

It is quite evident that this journalist has never worked himself through the mystery of the cross. He prefers a moon to a cross as the symbol of Christianity. But a moon is a dead affair, which has no light of its own. There are too many moons in the spiritual firmament now. Well, a star makes a good start. The wise men started out to find Jesus by following the star. But it is the cross that towers o'er the wrecks of time, despite the fact that it is an instrument of torture. The world has known three such instruments, the gallows, the guillotine and the cross, yet no guillotines or gallows are studded with precious gems and worn about the neck as jewellry. But a cross is seen through the art and the jewels of the world.

A recent writer speaks of the gruesomeness of teaching little children, or even grown people, to sing about a cross, because the very idea is repulsive and drives people away. Well, there are a number of moon and star songs written today. We hear a lot about moonlight and roses now. There are some cross songs too. Which shall endure the longer? In selecting the most popular song of the moment, "Moonlight and Roses," or "The Same Old Moon," or "By the Light of the Stars" might be chosen, but when competent judges select the most popular hymns of the ages, usually at the head of the list stands the simple title, "In the Cross of Christ I Glory," or "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross."

The moon and the stars have their worshippers and their writers, but compare them with those of the cross. The Old Testament might look back on Egyptian Pharaohs and Assyrian Sennacheribs, but Paul the Apostle stood on the ashes of Corinthian power and wisdom holding up the cross.

XI

APPROACHING GOD

PRAYER means approaching God. The essence of prayer is friendship. Too often we needy creatures construe prayer as meaning petition only. True, we often ask our friends to do something for us, but the person who has friends only for the purpose of "using them" is not a true friend. Not otherwise, we often ask God to do things for us, yet Jesus reminds us that God knows what we have need of before we ask him. Surely then, prayer involves something more than petition. In Matthew 6:6 we read: "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet." This injunction emphasizes a phase that is almost entirely ignored, namely, the revelation of God to the suppliant. Presbyterians usually define prayer as, "the offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by help of His Spirit, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies." But here it will be noticed, there is no recognition of meditative communion with the divine presence for the purpose of a communication from God to the soul.

Most people regard prayer as a means of asking God for something. But this is not the whole of prayer. There can be no real prayer without some disclosure of God to the soul. The word "closet" as used by Jesus is unusual. It is found less than a half-dozen times in the New Testament. As used in Matthew 6:6, conspicuous stress is laid upon the singular number of the personal pronoun. It is intensely individual. "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret, and they Father shall reward thee openly." "Closet" means, an inclosure, shut in for privacy. This idea would immediately suggest to the ancient Jew, the one preeminently private place, namely, the holy of holies, which, unlike many other Jewish buildings, was not only without doors and windows, but was roofed in and without even the skylight. It was always closed and was the one place that was peculiarly marked by silence, seclusion, separation and solitude. Only the high priest could enter here, and then but once a year and unaccompanied by any other human being. In the holy of holies, whose solitary piece of furniture was the mercy-seat, one man met the one true God in the one absolutely secret place for the one purpose of communing with God. The "closet" then, mentioned by Jesus, is the holy of holies where the praying individual approaches God alone, to commune with him at the mercy-seat.

The highest type of prayer is possible only when the individual soul seeks God absolutely alone, and to find such solitude the great Teacher bids us to "enter into the closet" at such time and place where we can shut ourselves in with him. For the sake of emphasis, this thought is repeated in a little different wording. "And when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father who is in secret." The word "secret" has practically the same meaning as the word "closet"—a secluded place. When we really pray, that is when we approach God, it requires a separation from the ordinary cares and activities of life. The visible world must be shut out. Therefore, we close our eyes. It is just like tuning in on the radio. In order to get the desired station, it is necessary to eliminate all other stations and be in absolute harmony with the station broadcasting the program in which we are interested. Now, when we approach God in prayer, the more perfectly we exclude or eliminate all worldly pursuits and pleasures, distracting cares and diverting thoughts, shutting out all else but God, the more perfect becomes our communion with him and our understanding of his will for our lives. Those who know through experience such secret times and places for prayer, will secure them at any cost, even if they have to rise before the dawn, as our Lord did.

The soul needs to meet God absolutely alone. There are secrets which no other human being, however intimate, ought to know. We do not turn the hidden recesses of our thought life inside out, even to our bosom friend: we would not if we could and we could not if we would. There is no door leading to the holy of holies of the soul; it is locked and securely sealed; forever hidden from the curious eyes of our fellow-men, and its silence is inviolable. Yet, "all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do"; and so, in this secret "closet," where we meet God absolutely alone, is the place for all these secrets. Nothing else can be substituted for this "closet." Public worship has its place, the family altar has its place, the more private prayer of husband and wife has its place also, but it cannot take the place of the solitary "closet." We cannot reveal everything to our nearest friend, but we cannot conceal anything from the eye of the Omniscient. He reads our thoughts when we are yet afar off and hears our words yet unformed on our lips. These are the secrets which must be brought to light in His presence, exposed, renounced, confessed and corrected. It is in the secret "closet" that we have this secret converse with God. Isaac went out to meditate at eventide. Jacob was left alone at Peniel, and there are times when we must enter the "closet" alone.

When we thus approach God in the solitary place, we practise the presence of God. There is nothing in the whole round of Christian experience which has such telling effect upon character, as this approach unto God in the secret chamber, and no soul can possibly attain unto its highest and truest self until it has thus practised the presence of God. Jesus Himself taught us that God is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit. He cannot be tested by the visible, audible, tangible. These channels utterly fail as channels of communication. The essence of God evades all material approach and analysis, and if God is to be known at all adequately He must be known through other channels than the material. The spirit alone possesses the higher senses whereby we can perceive God and communicate with Him. The man who lives a worldly life, never attempting to approach God, becomes a virtual atheist. It is possible to say, "I believe in God the Father Almighty" without even for one moment, having had a true sense of the presence of God. We may not deny that God is, and still not know that He is. There are two ways whereby the realisation of the divine presence may be cultivated. First, by a meditative reading or studying of the Scriptures, and, secondly, by communing with Him in the prayer-closet.

Prayer introduces us into divine fellowship. It implies meditation, opens the secret chambers and reveals God in all His attractiveness; discloses marvels and unlocks mysteries. It makes us realise that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Jesus fixes attention on this method of approaching God before He gives us His model prayer. In order to realise fully the presence of God, all the faculties and activities of the mind must be converged and concentrated, facilised and centralised, just as the scattered rays of light must be converged through a convex lense, and this cannot be done if there are things present to distract.

The profound lesson taught to the woman at Sychar's well, on the subject of worship, includes prayer as one of the highest acts of worship. God can be approached adequately only by what is spiritual in man. Among men, there is bodily contact and communication, such as hand joining hand, eye looking into eye, or words passing from lips to ears. But since God possesses no body such as ours, there can be no such sensible contact between God and man. He can be approached only spiritually. In order to realise such contact all the spiritual faculties must be alert and active, and all diversions of the mind must be avoided which render impossible exclusive attention to the divine object of thought. Now, we are so constituted, that we can only attend to one thing at a time. It is for this reason that some of the bodily functions, such as breathing, the beating of the heart, walking, etc. are carried on subconsciously. For if we had to give strict attention every time we breathed, or every time the heart beats, we would not get anything else accomplished. Nor can we fully exercise any one sense, when any other sense is fully occupied, there being provision for but one sense-impression at a time. For instance, we cannot judge of a beautiful painting and give strict attention to a musical rendition at the same time. Man is so constituted that he can do but one thing, thoroughly, at a time. To attain the closet approach to God, to get the most vivid realisation of his presence, and so the greatest power and blessing from Him, all other thought must be shut out, and all interruptions avoided.

When the high priest approached God in the "holy of holies," it is not stated anywhere that he offered up verbal supplication or petitions. He seems to have gone into the holiest to appear before God, to present himself before the mercy-seat. His very presence constituted his plea. There he seems to have waited, not so much to offer up prayers unto God, as to receive from God impressions and revelations. The mercy-seat was, primarily, a place of divine revelation. The high priest waited there for a message which he bore back to the people in benediction. So the prayer-closet is not only an oratory—a place of petition to God, but also an observatory—a place to receive new views and revelations from God. There is, therefore, a quest which is higher than mere request—it is seeking God's will for our life. If we do what he wills us to do, we will always do that which is the very best for ourselves and others. The soul that prays thus, speaks God's language and understands—to a degree at least—God's ways. He gets as well as gives, and finds that the choicest part of prayer consists in the reception of divine impressions and communications.

In true prayer the whole nature goes out in adoration, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, intercession, but the whole nature also opens all its windows for the incoming of blessing. Communion unfolds into intercommunication. Jacob's ladder rests upon the floor of the closet, and reaches up to the very throne room, and the angelic messengers descend to bring blessings as well as ascend, to bear petitions. When we frequently approach God in this manner we simply cannot doubt his existence and reality any more than we can doubt the existence and reality of a friend, with whom we habitually converse. God has intended that such contact with him is to be a demonstration to us that he is the ever present, living, helping Father in heaven. At the very bottom, then, prayer is the meeting of the human suppliant with God alone, for supplication and communion at the mercy-seat, and the revelation of the presence and character of God.

The prayer-closet furnishes the key to many mysteries, such as Jacob's experience at Bethel. "Surely God was in this place and I knew it not. This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven," although a mere desert place and a stone for a pillow. It is when we are left alone that the choicest revelations come. Nathanael under the fig tree was holding secret and solitary converse with God, and when Jesus said to him, "When thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee," He was merely letting Nathanael know that He had met him before in the secret place.

In order to get such impressions from God, it is necessary to spend some time in prayer. I am not forgetful that our Lord admonishes us to beware lest we become as the Pharisee, who thinks that he shall be heard for his much speaking. It is not by many words, nor by long prayers that we are going to prevail, to be sure, but it is also true that haste defeats the very purpose of true prayer. The person who rushes into the presence of God, hurrying through a few formal petitions and rushes out again to pursue the cares of life, does not remain in the secret place long enough to break away from the outside impressions and lay hold of the inside impressions. He does not take time to fix his gaze upon the unseen realities, and many a so-called man of prayer, for this reason, has never once in his life really experienced the actual presence of God. With spirit tossed to and fro, and driven up and down by wordly thoughts and cares, it is as impossible to reflect upon God as it is for a lake to mirror the blue skies in the time of a fierce storm.

When we approach God in reality, prayer becomes a delight and not irksome. It ceases to be a mere duty and becomes a great privilege. Such a God-revealing habit of prayer becomes the very foundation stone for all holy living. Everything vital to life is nourished on the atmosphere of the holy of holies. Prayer thus becomes spiritual respiration and the holy of holies furnishes the ozone. He who has learned to practise God's presence in the secret place will also practise His presence in the market-place. He will just naturally fly to God in prayer in every time of need. He will not only find it profitable, but natural, to pray whenever the occasion demands, whether it is in public worship, at business, at study or at play. He will have so trained himself that God's presence can be realised under all circumstances, and the prayers he offers in public will not be vain repetitions, wordy and showy, but they will compel interest in spiritual things.

We should not be surprised to find that this approach to God which reveals him to us, also unveils ourselves. Isaiah, in the presence of God, says, "Woe is me; for I am a man of unclean lips and dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." But when Isaiah bewailed his unclean lips, then the seraph touched those same lips with a live coal from off the altar of God and said, "Lo, this hath touched thy lips and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged." It is also interesting to note that this sense of divine presence which purges from sin, also keeps us from sin. Paul tells the Corinthian Christians that they are the holy of holies, because the Spirit of God dwelleth in them, and on the basis of this fact, he says, "having, therefore, these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." What a safeguard is the consciousness, "Thou, God, seest me," when sudden temptation, overwhelming, overpowering confronts us! Only when the sense of God's presence is lost, can voluntary sin be possible.

This sense of divine presence is in every way so helpful to prayer that every element and exercise of prayer is dependent upon it. It promotes heartfelt thanksgiving, for it reveals God as He truly is. We get glimpses of His character and glory, which are the inspiration of gratitude. Really to know that God is, is of far greater benefit to the individual than to know what he does. He is love, and therefore all his works are lovely and loving. We have also seen that to realise the divine presence is to prompt the most heart-searching contribution and confession for, in the light of His purity, sin's enormity and deformity are made visible.

Likewise, when the mind is filled with fresh revelations from God, of His truth and grace, the reality and verity of His promises, intercession and supplication are made with more confidence. There is, therefore, no phase of prayer which this vision of God in the secret place does not influence.

Having once experienced the actual presence of God in the secret place, is it possible ever to think of prayer as childish? The heathen pin their prayers to revolving wheels in the waterbrooks, nail them to whirling windmills, or scribble them on the stone piles by the roadside, but the heathen have never stood in the very presence of the great God as the Christians have. Some of the prayers of Christians may be as foolish as the heathen prayers which float in the breeze at the top of a flagstaff, but the Christian, who has met God face to face, as it were, in the prayer-closet, sees no longer any foolishness in prayer.

Is it childish to pray? It is no more childish for the Christian to stand in the presence of his Heavenly Father in the secret place and make known his thoughts and desires, than it is for the little child to stand before his mother's knee and express his childish thoughts and wishes. Would you hush your child standing thus before you, simply because his wisdom is limited? I think not. Neither does our Father in heaven hush His children when they stand before Him, conscious of His presence, however ridiculous our requests may be in the light of His infinite wisdom.

But is it reasonable to pray? This is a law-controlled universe in which we live. Every effect must have an adequate cause. How unreasonable, then, for me to suppose that my desire is going to overturn the law and order of a well established universe! Is not God great enough and good enough to do all things by Himself? Is it not a bit presumptuous on my part, to assume to instruct Omnipotence? God is perfect in all His ways, why should I undertake to influence him to be good? In a former chapter we saw that God is friendly. He is a perfect social being. He is not content to be a stranger to anybody. He would be less than perfect if He were. Therefore, God seeks to be friendly with me. The essence of prayer is friendship. Now mere beggary is not true friendship. True, we often ask our friends to do something for us but, as we have stated before, the person who has friends just for the purpose of "using" them is not a true friend. We make a great mistake when we construe prayer as merely asking God to do something for us. Jesus reminds us that God knows what we need before we ask Him. Now, if because this is a universe governed by law, and if because God is all-wise, all-loving and all-powerful, we arrive at the hasty conclusion that there is no room for asking God for anything and, therefore, no place for prayer, then in order to carry our argument to its logical conclusion, we would be compelled to say that in all our human relations there can be no place for social intercourse when there is no occasion to ask for anything. Then children should not speak to parents or to each other unless they want something. Seeing the unreasonableness of such reasoning, we conclude with the Psalmist that, "the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him." If prayer means approaching God, then it is good for man, whether he has a petition to offer or not. It is practising friendship with God.

While it is true that friendship, and not beggary, is the essence of true prayer, yet it is also true that Jesus taught that prayer brings about changes. "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." He unmistakably taught that if we pray to God, in faith believing, he will do for us things which otherwise he would not do. Nor is this making an unreasonable claim. It does not involve the shattering of the laws of the universe. Unless we know everything, let us not even deny the impossible. If God has ordained what is to be, He has also ordained the means whereby it is to be accomplished, and prayer may be a part of the ordained means of bringing about certain things.

Jesus taught His disciples that men ought always to pray and not to faint. In other words, men are under obligation to pray. Now in a moral and social order, obligation is reciprocal. If God is a moral and a social being and has brought into being a moral and a social order, He would, therefore, be under obligation to participate in the moral and social intercourse of that order. This is exactly what we believe God does. The Scripture teaches it. We are told that He is more willing to give than we are willing to ask. How then, dare we fail to pray? We are also a part of this moral and social order. Shall we refrain from doing our part? We are mutually obligated. We are obligated to pray and God is abundantly willing and able to answer our prayer, remembering always, that our wishes are to be associated with His, and that we are to pray saying: "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done."

XII

INTERVIEWING GOD: LITURGICAL QUEST

INTERVIEWING a great person is sure to stir the emotions, and cause us to give expression to the feelings experienced. It was my pleasure one time, when a graduate student at Princeton University, to have an interview with a President-elect of the United States. On election night, 1912, a small group of graduate students from Princeton University was given an audience on the front lawn of the home of President-elect Woodrow Wilson. Our emotions were profoundly agitated, as we grasped the hand and conversed with the man who was actually elected to the highest office of the land. Our feelings just could not be suppressed, so we fell to praising him whom we realised to be truly great. We asked him to do us the favour of autographing his own photograph, which we would send to him. He promised to do so and faithfully kept the promise.

Not otherwise, worship or worth-ship, consists in interviewing God, ascribing worth to God, describing his worth in adoring praise, keeping before ourselves his infinite excellence. Worship is more than thanksgiving and praise, embracing both, yet above both in adoration, the whole being going out to God in devout words and raptures that cannot be uttered in the mute language of the affections which can find no adequate, articulate expression. And, on the other hand, receiving from God peace of spirit, satisfaction of mind and holy inspiration. Worship is the form of prayer which echoes in the Apocalypse when the door is opened into heaven: "Thou art worthy, O Lord!" The throngs of the redeemed and the angelic hosts, lost in the vision of infinite excellence and worthiness, cease not day nor night from such adoration.

The subject of worship is receiving more attention today than it has for generations. It has become so much the subject of conversation among clergymen that, wherever they are gathered together, some one of them is sure to ask the question: "What innovations are you introducing into your Order of Worship?" The boards of control of the various Protestant denominations are sending out to the churches suggested orders of worship and, when a minister is called into a new field nowadays, he most always seeks to make an impression on his congregation by introducing something new into the Order of Worship.

The student of the history of worship must travel far, through obscure and perplexing paths; but, at least, he finds that worship, in its origin and essence, is a striving after closer and more intimate relations with God, and the worshipper's periodical escape from the turmoil of every day life with its disappointments and sorrows; its competition and its discord, its complete immersion in that which is material in order that, for a brief space at least, he may interview the Eternal and receive spiritual impressions. The present inclination to modify ways of worship is not entirely due to a craving for novelties and a spirit of restlessness, but rather to a very deep-seated and widespread conviction that the act of worship can be made more genuinely expressive and more spiritually uplifting.

Laymen, as well as ministers, are more and more inclining to introduce variations into the worship. Observe how the old-fashioned opening exercises of the Sunday School have been changed into departmental periods of worship, with a different Order of Worship for each department. Young People's organisations, and the organisations for intermediates and juniors conduct their worship periods in a way that is often regarded by their elders as irreverent. Even the women's organisations in some churches have so completely altered their worship period as to alarm their pastors.

The more conservative minister of the Gospel sits back and asks himself the question, as he well may ask: "What good will ever come out of these experiments? Will they prove any more satisfactory than the old way?" Surely some of these experiments are foolish and unworthy, especially those that are based upon individual caprice. In all of those cases where a change in the Order of Worship is sought, the intentions are good but the good intentions are not always backed up by the best of judgement. Little permanent value can be expected from individual, inward impulse. The true scientist does not ignore the efforts of others in his line. He will study their attempts lest he duplicate their failures. Now in the sphere of worship there are those who are working in the dark, because they have no knowledge of the plan of worship followed by others. Original experiments are valuable only when the range of observation is sufficiently wide.

Let us then, briefly, observe on the basis of Prof.

E. H. Byington's Research, how others worship, not for the purpose of imitating, but for the purpose of discovering the spirit that has brought forth these forms and preserved their vitality. To this we must add the experience of our own day and generation in order that our worship may be a genuine experience, expressed in ways that will satisfy our present desires and needs.

Protestant Christians depend pretty largely upon words to express themselves in the Order of Worship. The Eastern churches, on the other hand, to a very great degree, employ the physical. The entire five senses are brought into play. The worshipper uses his ears of course, but he also uses his eyes to behold the many pictures, the gorgeous robes and actions of the priests and the many expressive acts of his fellow worshippers. The sense of smell is appealed to frequently through the much used incense burners. He responds to the sense of touch when the outline of the Cross is made upon his forehead with holy oil. The sense of taste is called into play as he partakes of the sacrament and the memorial cake. Many physical motions are practised to give expression to the inner emotions, as he bows, prostrates himself to the floor, crosses himself and kisses the holy objects. He lights candles and puts them out again, and many other acts are engaged in to give expression to his sense of devotion. Two factors are mainly responsible for shaping the Order of Worship of the Eastern churches, which has continued practically unchanged for more than twelve hundred years, namely, the Oriental temperament (which is highly emotional) and the widespread illiteracy of the times. The illustrative and the symbolic appear everywhere. Objects are made to take the place of the printed page.

In most of the churches of the far East, the church edifice is altogether unheated, even in the dead of winter. There are no pews or seats and the great throngs of men, women and children will stand for two or more hours in a most reverent attitude. Sometimes they will kneel or prostrate themselves upon the floor, if the priest brings to their attention some special ground for devotion. Every little movement of the priest has a meaning of its own to the worshipper in the East. The following is quoted from one who was a frequent attendant upon the religious services of the great Eastern churches: "At the Epiphany service, the priest stood before a large vessel containing the water of the blessed. He breathed upon it to indicate the moving presense of the Holy Spirit. In his hand he held a Cross and near by were two burning candles. While chanting, he took one of the candles and dipped it into the water until the flame was extinguished. This represented the baptism of Jesus, the Light of the World. He did this with a second candle and then with a third, for the Eastern church practises triune immersion. This also typifies the Trinity. Afterwards he took the Cross and dipped that in the water three times."

In order to enter into the spirit of worship in an Eastern church, the worshipper must constantly be looking for the experience which is symbolised. In making the sign of the Cross, the thumb and first two fingers touch at the tips, to symbolise the Trinity. Then the brow, the breast, the right and the left shoulder are touched to symbolise the consecration of mind, heart, soul and strength. Incense is almost constantly in use. The priest holds the censer, which is swung, now toward the altar, now toward the Holy Doors. He passes through the worshipping crowds, swinging the censer before the objects he meets, such as pictures and sacred articles, and also swings the censer so that the fragrant smoke reaches the face of the worshippers. The "holy kiss" is much practised, although the persons kissing do not actually come into contact with each other's faces.

The church building itself has a symbolic shape. One dome indicates the unity of God, three domes the Trinity, five Jesus Christ, and the four evangelists, etc. The most prominent feature of an Eastern church, perhaps, is the image-screen or partition running across the entire front of the church, behind which are the sanctuary and the altar. In front of the image-screen is a narrow platform, with steps leading down onto the main floor of the church. There are three doors or gates in this partition, the middle one being designated as the Royal Gate. The officiating priest stands behind the Royal Gate which is, for the most part, closed so that the officiating priest is invisible most of the time. He reads most of the service to himself, occasionally breaking out in audible tones, and the choir, deacons, reader and others join in the response. While the officiating priest is reading secretly, that is to himself, inaudibly, the choir, the deacons or the readers carry on the very elaborate responsive service. The readers are laymen and often recite their part from memory.

The image-screen or partition, receives its name from the fact that it is covered with images or 'icons,' beautiful pictures, and other sacred articles. If the picture of John the Baptist is on the image-screen, it is not considered inconsistent, if John has one head lying on the platter on a table and another head on his shoulders.

A worshipper, who was once asked about that inconsistency, merely remarked: "You could hardly expect the man (John the Baptist) to stand there without a head."

At intervals, the Royal Gate swings open and the curtains are drawn, as the officiating priest, gorgeously robed, steps forth chanting. His every move is highly symbolical. If he appears holding the Bible, he represents Jesus going forth to preach the Gospel. If he appears with the cup, he represents Jesus going into the garden of Gethsemane. The entire service of the Eastern orthodox church covers three or four hours, or even more. But what they call the Liturgy, and the Roman Catholics call the Mass, occupies only an hour or two. The devotional service which precedes the Liturgy is of several hours' duration, and is seldom attended by any except the officiants. There is one form of Assyrian service which is so long that, if it were not shortened by the priest reading most of the service at home, it would last all night. Indeed, it is called the All Night Vigil. The sermon which follows the Liturgy is hardly to be considered an integral part of the worship. It is often omitted and when given at all is very short.

Despite the highly ritualistic form, there is great simplicity and freedom in the form of worship. For instance, when the Communion is administered, it is not uncommon for entire families, including father, mother, children and babes in arms, to come up to the priest and receive the Communion from the priest, as he places a spoonful in the mouth of each person. In the Eastern churches the bread of the Communion is placed in the wine, and is given to the worshipper, by the priest, in a spoon.

The Eastern churches do not believe in purgatory, but they pray for the dead. Sometimes a large cake figures in this service. Candles are placed on the cake and lighted, and sometimes, coloured sweetmeats. The priest receives prayers for the dead before the cake, then it is cut and divided among the worshippers, who eat it as they depart. The principal purpose of worship for the man in the Eastern church seems to be that he may stand in the presence of God. Conscious contact with God is for him the great reality of worship. He seeks no opportunity for self-expression and no way to procure blessing. His ritual tends to turn his attention away from self towards God, and encourages his contemplation of the greatness and glory of God. This ultimately moves him to praise and adoration, which is the outstanding feature of Eastern worship.

The essential part of the worship in the Roman Catholic Church is very brief, requiring, on some occasions, five minutes or less. Low Mass, the service most often attended by Roman Catholics, averages about thirty-five minutes, as over against two hours or more required for the Liturgy in the Eastern church. The morning Catholic worship is a Communion service, at which, very often, the priest only participates. It is designated as a mass. There are two important parts to the mass, namely, the "transubstantiation," when, as they believe, the bread and wine of the Communion are changed into the actual blood and body of Christ. This is a miracle which takes place at the very moment the priest utters the words, "This is My body" and "This is My blood." The other important part of the mass is the offering on the altar, by the priest, of the bread and the wine as an actual sacrifice of Jesus Christ unto

God, which is a repetition of His sacrifice on Calvary, only it is "unbloody," as they call it. This offering is called the "Sacrifice of the Mass." When these two parts of the worship are performed, the matter of time becomes secondary. The so-called introduction may be longer or shorter.

Mass is observed in the morning only. When services of worship are held at other hours of the day, the priest holds up the bread and the wine, which have been consecrated at a previous mass, and which is called the "Host," and the people are supposed to adore it, because it is supposed to be the body of Jesus with His divine indwelling presence. This kind of worship is called "eucharistic" because it centres in the Lord's Supper or Eucharist.

The worshipper in the Roman Catholic Church has no part in the worship other than that of being an observer. The priest stands with his back to the audience most of the time, and they can understand little or nothing of what he says. There is no music. All the worshipper is permitted to do is to kneel and rise at appointed times. There are seats for the people to occupy and the church is usually heated.

Low mass requires about thirty-five minutes, as has already been stated, and high mass, which used to require nearly two hours, has been greatly shortened in more modern times. The mass is offered sometimes as often as eight times in a morning, or to suit the convenience of the worshipper. There is action from start to finish in the worship. The priest is constantly in motion, and many of these motions are dramatic. Drowsiness is impossible, because the worshipper changes his position so frequently. In the "transubstantiation" the devout Roman Catholic believes that he witnesses the great miracle of the changing of the bread and wine into the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ, and so he is brought into the living presence of his Lord.

During the mass the worshipper is allowed, if he desires, to read prayers from a specially prepared book, or to recite prayers from memory, or to offer original petitions. He can, therefore, watch the progress of the worship carried on by the priest and, at the same time, hold private communion through prayer. Besides the ritual of the Latin mass, the Order of Worship also includes the reading of the Scriptures, the announcements, requests for prayers for the dead, and a sermon, which is always short and practical. At the close of the mass there are prayers in the vernacular, in which the congregation is permitted to take part, responsively.

In the high mass, however, music is used and the time required in the service depends very largely upon the music. The singers are usually very well trained and sing the great masterpieces of the great musical composers. Linked with this are the beautiful interiors of the churches, the handsome altars, and the gorgeous robes of the priests, who move about with symbolic actions, all of which are designed to thrill the worshipping congregation. Much use is made of images and pictures and Mary is constantly held up, because it is believed that the average person can understand her and approach her better than Christ. It is hard for the Protestant to distinguish some aspects of this worship from idolatry, but the worship is associated with personality and is intended to bring the worshipper into the presence of God.

When Martin Luther and his associates, learned that it was impossible to persuade the Roman Church to accept the much needed reforms, they found themselves dismembered and a new Order of Worship had to be set up for the many churches that were thrown upon their own resources. The principal innovations introduced by Luther were: First; the employment of a "living language." This was indeed a wonderful change and improvement over the "dead languages" employed throughout Christendom for centuries. Second; Luther eliminated all prayers for the dead, to Mary, to the saints and to martyrs. Incense was abolished and symbolism reduced to a minimum. Everything that militated against the doctrine of "justification by faith" was banished, including the recognition of purgatory and relics. Third; Luther introduced a change in the idea of the Lord's Supper. He highly reverenced this sacrament but denied transubstantiation, holding to consubstantiation instead. Other Protestant bodies do not share this belief. Lutheran worship, not being centred on the sacrament, has been broadened out, although at the same time, Luther endeavoured to save much of the form of worship of the old historic church and restore it to its primitive beauty and fruitfulness. The Liturgy is used and the minister leads, but he leads simply because there must be a leader. He is a comrade leader. The minister and congregation approach the throne of Grace together. They are one. Fourth; Possibly the most important change Luther introduced into the Order of Worship was the congregational singing of hymns. This has made Christian worship, in all Protestant churches, a living, vital experience. Fifth; Luther took away the Eucharist and put in its place, the Word of God. The Bible Worship is now considered communion with God, God speaking to man and man speaking to God. Man must be instructed. Sincerity and devotion are not enough. Knowledge coming from the Bible must be present. Having received grace and truth from Jesus Christ, the worshipper is prepared to glorify God.

The worship of the Church of England is marked by its beauty. Over a century passed in its development, that century being the one in which Shakespeare, Milton and Bacon wrote and in which the Authorised Version of the Bible was produced. Its worship centres in the Book of Common Prayer. Among the features which add to its beauty and value are simplicity, the use of short words of Saxon origin and recognition of the thoughts and experiences of every-day life. Kneeling in prayer and in receiving the Communion, standing for praise and singing and for the reading of the Gospel lesson at Communion, are almost universally practised. Some churches also practise the bowing of the head at the mention of the name of Jesus and the making of the sign of the Cross. The sermon may be poor or entirely lacking, but the worshipper, as he joins with others in praising the only true and living God, gets the impression that worship, in itself, is important and worth while.

In the four liturgical churches, namely, the Eastern, the Roman, the Lutheran, and the Angelican, we find certain common characteristics, and while some of these features are found in other churches, they are more pronounced in the liturgical churches. These characteristics are as follows: A supplied ritual, making it unnecessary for those officiating to assume any responsibility, except when a sermon is preached which, for the most part, must be original. All their services are, to a large degree, antiphonal, hence called responsive; they observe the historic continuity of worship, that is they use historic expressions in their worship which means much to them. To read the prayer of some noted saint of centuries ago means infinitely more to them than to be led in prayer by the man officiating now; they hold the temple conception of the church, that is they believe God is there, so it makes no difference whether a congregation is present or not. God is there and they approach the church with fear and reverence; their worship is centred about Christ. The whole liturgy is based upon the events of the Christian year. They make constant use of the historic creeds and the symbols used all relate to Christ. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is given a prominent place. We may not approve of liturgical worship, but it must be respected for its antiquity and its beauty.

XIII

INTERVIEWING GOD: NON-LITURGICAL QUEST

THE Order of Worship of the Reformed Churches is almost entirely the gift of John Calvin, "the pale Frenchman with the creative mind." He built up an entirely new Order of Worship on purely Bible foundations. He effected a complete break with the ritual of the historic Church, giving to the world a most inspiring form of worship, which has actually influenced the lives of the worshippers, imparting strength to endure hardships and temptation. Like Luther, he gave great prominence to the sermon and made use of the vernacular, but unlike Luther, he left nothing of the old forms. In the liturgical forms of worship, the officiating clergyman has but to follow the Book of Worship. The order, form, content, and even the motions and gestures were indicated. Absolutely nothing was left to the judgement of the man in charge. Calvin, however, entrusted a great deal to the responsibility for the service of worship to the clergyman in charge. This, it will at once be seen, was a bold step indeed, for many of the clergymen were former priests, utterly untrained in relying upon their own judgement in such matters and new ministers could not be trained for immediate service. Calvin's Order of Worship was thoroughly non-liturgical, although sometimes the term, "Calvin's liturgy" is applied to what he formulated.

The minister was given the freedom of selecting the Scripture lesson, which could be selected from the Old or New Testament, and he was allowed to select the prayers, or even pray extemporaneously. On week days he was especially expected to do the latter. The worship was usually begun with a short prayer, which was read. Then a layman, who was seated just under the pulpit, rose and having marked out a Psalm in ciphers on a slate, set it up and the Psalm was sung by the congregation. Then the minister rose again, and after leading in an extemporaneous prayer, named a text from the Scriptures and expounded it. The prayer of intercession was then offered by the minister, praying for the congregation, the state, rulers, Lords, the Republic of Geneva, and for all men everywhere. Following this prayer, a Psalm was sung once more and the minister pronounced a blessing and declared the service concluded. This service was held at seven o'clock in the morning. At the noon hour another minister began a new service, at which a section from Calvin's Catechism was expounded instead of the Scriptures. Again at two o'clock a third service was begun, which was very similar to the one held at seven o'clock in the morning, excepting that there were more extemporaneous prayers offered by the minister. In all these services, the congregation was held up before the Almighty in prayer relating to their especial needs. The Scripture lessons were selected with reference to the needs of the time and the sermon was designed truly to stir the conscience and impart strength. If the service was lacking a little in beauty, it surely made it up in the strength which it gave.

The new responsibility intrusted to the Reformed ministers was a powerful intellectual and spiritual stimulus, which not only awakened originality in them, but inspired new religious zeal in the worshippers. For a hundred years or more the Scotch Presbyterians used the Book of Common Order brought from Geneva by Knox. The Continental Reformed Churches have modified this Calvinistic form of worship. The strong feature of Calvin's Order of Worship was that it met the needs of the people. Theirs was a persecuted Church, and for such the need was not so much a beautiful worship as one that would inspire courage and make men dauntless in danger. Its extreme simplicity gave it power. Congregational singing supplied the emotional element that came from the old rituals in a new and more vital way. People who have sung in unison the articles of their faith, are invincible. History proves to us that the singing movements have been the successful movements. The singing of the Psalms as a congregation made the workship, their worship, in a very real sense. The emotions they stirred were the deepest known to man; their aspirations the highest; their anguish the keenest and their hope the most glorious. Surely they had lost nothing in singing the Psalms, a very part of the Bible itself, as over against listening to the chanting of the priests, which they could not understand. For them worship was an expression of strength and sentiment. The Reformed Order of Worship has changed with the need of the times, but it still reveals a strength with its added beauty.

In 1643, the English Parliament decided to do away with the Angelican Order of Worship and authorised the Westminster Assembly to decide upon a form of church government and discipline, and also to settle upon an Order of Worship which would harmonise with the Continent and Scotland. A Directory of Worship was, accordingly, prepared and adopted by the English and Scotch Parliaments. The Scotch were not dissatisfied with the Genevan type of worship, but adopted the Directory of Worship for the sake of unity. Then England, under Charles II, dropped it all, returning to the Angelican type of worship. The Scotch, however, continued with the Directory of Worship, which was Calvinistic in thought and spirit. The Directory of Worship retained all the strength of Calvinistic worship, but the minister was given even more liberty of judgement. Prayer became less historical, but more related to experience. It is this Directory of Worship, with some modifications, that has been adopted by the Presbyterian Church United States of America, and other Presbyterian bodies. The chief modification made by the Presbyterian Church in America, is the singing of hymns in the place of psalms. There are, of course, other modifications, but the influence of the Westminster Standards are still plainly visible in the order of worship of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America.

The ideal of English leaders was uniformity of worship. Robert Browne, however, broke through the barriers, and although afterwards he returned, he made a breach which others followed. The three notable groups of independent churches at this time were, the English Congregationalists, from whom the Pilgrims of the *Mayflower* sprang, the Baptists and the Friends or Quakers. At the beginning these groups had much in common, but as time went on, the difference grew greater and greater and the groups subdivided. They were called Independent, because they aimed to be independent of the Angelican and the Presbyterian, as well as the Roman Church. They formed no ecclesiastical body of their own, which might presume to dictate to them how each congregation, or each group or individual in the congregation, might see fit to worship. The Order of Worship was psalm-singing, Bible reading, prayer, and a sermon, but the Quakers, the most important of this group of Independents, abolished even this formality. Their worship was very solemn and stately and marked by profound reverence. They preferred quiet to anything that had been previously prepared, so their worship was characterised by spontaneity. The Quakers abandoned all contact with the historic forms of worship, disregarding even the work of the Reformers, and endeavoured to return to the worship of the Apostolic Church of the First century. They believed that the simplicity, spontaneity, fellowship and the priesthood of believers which they practised, was also practised by the Apostles. They felt that they were restoring the freedom of the Holy Spirit to the Churches, as it was in Apostolic times and as Christ had intended it should always be. In Quakerism we find the most radical expression of Protestantism. They were kept from extravagances and excesses, however, by unwritten tradition. Some of these unwritten traditions came to them from the Reformed Churches, and some were acquired as Quakerism developed. This is what saved them from the excesses which caused the downfall of the Anabaptists.

The features which characterise non-liturgical worship may be summed up somewhat as follows: First;

the responsibility entrusted the officiating person. The liturgical leader has responsibility, to be sure, but how different the responsibility vested in the non-liturgical leader! He must be alert and original in a far different sense and, at the same time, the responsibility literally drives him to a dependence upon God: Second; it recognises situations as the liturgical worship cannot. Liturgical worship beautifully recognises the Christian Year, but there it stops. Non-liturgical worship, without becoming secularised, can recognise an impending election, the vacation season, the wickedness of the times, and even a heavy rainfall of the previous night, by the Scriptures selected, the hymns sung and through the prayers offered, and the sermon that is delivered. This inspires gratitude and heartfelt thanksgiving, so long as it is guarded against becoming trivial and grotesque, and it is so safeguarded in the accredited Protestant Churches. It is a valuable aid to real worship: Third; it recognises the experimental element. In the liturgical churches, persons baptised in infancy are received into the Church at Confirmation, which takes place very early in life. Thus practically all baptised persons become members of the Church. In the non-liturgical churches, however, only those persons are received into the Church who experience the religious change commonly known as Conversion, with manifestations of repentance and faith, and so religious experience became an important factor in non-liturgical worship. Fourth; the consciousness of fellowship. In the liturgical churches everything makes for awe and reverence. The divine presence is acknowledged by bowing, kneeling, prostrating one's self and standing, etc. In the non-liturgical churches worshippers are conscious of fellowship with one another as they worship. For instance, in the observance of the Lord's Supper, in some churches the worshippers come down the aisles of the church and kneel about the altar, as they partake of the elements; in other churches the Lord's Table is spread before the congregation, which sits, as it were, around the table, and the minister, distributes them to the elders who, in turn, distribute them to the congregation. In this observance there is the consciousness of actual fellowship and communion with the other saints present, as well as with God, which seems to reestablish the followship and communion of that upper room, in which our Saviour instituted the sacrament.

From time to time changes have taken place in the Order of Worship of both the liturgical and the non-liturgical churches. Especially is this true in America. In the liturgical churches there is a general tendency to shorten the more lengthy parts of the service, while in the non-liturgical churches there is a gradual tendency to multiply the parts of the service, with a shortening of the longer parts, such as the long prayer, the sermon, etc. Responsive parts are becoming more popular in the non-liturgical churches. A sermonette for the juniors is growing in popular favour and often the juniors sing a hymn, either in entering the church edifice or before or after the sermonette, and sometimes they also receive their own offering. Musical responses are becoming very popular. The ministers, when robed at all, are robed in black, with some few exceptions, but vestments for both minister and choir are growing in favour in non-liturgical churches.

The open Bible resting on the pulpit in the front of the church is the almost universal characteristic of the

Protestant churches in America. In some instances, however, where a church desires to be a little distinctive or unusual, it places its pulpit at one side of the platform and a reading desk at the other side. I have often wondered if such churches know that this is a disappearing custom among liturgical churches. The reason why they are discontinuing it is because the pulpit located in the centre of the church assures infinitely better acoustics and so, in imitating the liturgical churches—if they are imitating—they are doing what so often happens, namely they are imitating the bad features.

Practically all of the non-liturgical churches are making some effort to modify their Order of Worship so as to lift public worship to a higher plane. In 1903 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America directed a committee, headed by Dr. Henry Van Dyke, to prepare a book of simple forms and services, which resulted in the publishing of the Book of Common Worship, for voluntary use only. This book contains Orders of Worship for different occasions, prayers for various occasions and orders for special occasions such as marriage, baptism, communion, dedications, ordinations, etc. Many other Protestant denominations have prepared and issued similar books.

Most progressive churches nowadays are printing regular weekly Bulletins, containing the Order of Worship for Morning and Evening services, together with the stated announcements for the week. Many churches are also publishing monthly parish papers, in which the activities of the church are more fully announced and reviewed. These publications are invaluable aids to any church.

The hymn books issued by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, United States of America, in recent years are very valuable contributions to more meaningful worship. Among the hymn books issued may be mentioned especially the Hymnal (revised) with the Psalter in the back. The smaller Hymnal, with Psalter selections in the back. This hymnal is designed for worship where the musical conditions are kept simple. It is less cumbersome than the Hymnal and is now being used in many Presbyterian churches. The Church School Hymnal for Youth, designed for use in the Young People's Division of the church is truly a book of worship. In the back it contains about seventy-five pages of most useable and valuable worship materials, including worship programs for various occasions, responsive readings, prayers and collects and religious poetry. The Junior Church School Hymnal, with an edition for teacher as well as pupil. In the back it also contains exceedingly useful worship materials.

The present tendency in worship is toward the practical. Our age is not wholly materialistic, but it is intensely practical. I believe there are as many people attending church today as in generations past, but all go less frequently and because they live practical lives six days in the week are inclined to expect the practical in the Order of Worship. This must be recognised, but not yielded to to the extent of destroying the real and deeper values of worship. Ours is an age of some spiritual progress and of much religious and theological advance. But it is doubtful if this age can be designated as an especially worshipful age.

The four elements of true worship are very beautifully given to us in the Gospels. The first is manifested in the worship of the infant Christ. Its characteristic features are praise and adoration, oblation and sacrifice, as they are revealed in the prostration of the Magi and their costly offerings. The second element of worship, and the one most frequently practised, is declaration of our need for ourselves and also for our brethren, of our conviction and of our thanksgiving. This element of worship always reveals some sense of personal benefit, either eagerly sought after or already received. The demoniac among the tombs, Mary's request after the death of her brother, Lazarus, the Syrophenician woman with her persistent request, all illustrate some need, while the sailors, after the storm on the sea had been stilled, and the man born blind, illustrate conviction. Thanksgiving is illustrated by the Samaritan leper who alone returned and fell at the feet of the Master and gave thanks. In all these cases, some sense of personal benefit is revealed. The third element of worship is just the opposite of the second. It is not outward, but inward. The feelings are kindled, the heartstrings are touched, as when the disciples looked upon the wounded side and the pierced hands of the risen Christ. Such was the worship of Mary Magdalene and her companions; such were the feelings of the eleven disciples when they saw their Lord again in Galilee. The fourth element of worship marks yet another type. It is the worship, not merely of the heart, but of the spirit. Not of Christ crucified and risen, but of Christ ascended. When the ascension was fulfilled, then the disciples rose to the type of worship that was really and truly spiritual. We reach the climax of devotion in this spiritual detachment. The disciples realised, after the ascension, that they were parted from their Lord, physically, but, at the same time, they were conscious of a higher union. These are the essential elements and main features of worship as we learn them from the Gospels. All of them are needed. None of them, by itself, constitutes truly Christian worship, and as we study the history of Christian worship we find, repeatedly, that failure has resulted from emphasising one or more of these elements and ignoring others.

In most Protestant Churches the sermon has always been and still continues to be one of the outstanding parts of public worship. A sermon is "an oral address to the popular mind, on religious truth contained in the Scriptures, and elaborately treated with a view to persuasion." The sermon has been greatly shortened in modern times, until in some churches it is scarcely more than a sermonette, yet that sermonette may be profoundly significant. The sermon, as defined above, is so important because of the element of religious instruction which it imparts. Singing the hymns is the part of worship which lies most definitely in the reach of the average worshipper. The words and music are before him, but the hymns may mean very little to him unless he has the correct attitude toward them. There are three types of hymns; the prayer hymns, which are addressed to God; the sermon hymns, which are addressed to men, and the personal hymns, which give expression to self. It is usually a good plan for the minister to make an explanatory statement as to the type of the hymn before it is sung. The tunes are very important in inspiring the spirit of worship. Some tunes stir the feet, but not the soul, because they are too jazzy. On the other hand, a tune that resembles a funeral dirge is likewise fatal to real worship. Familiarity with the tunes is also necessary for worship. The congregation should sing the old hymns of the Church with the old tunes frequently, so that the singing is a real spiritual impulse. New tunes, of course, should also be learned.

The choir music in our churches is constantly growing more sacred and worshipful. I mean by that, that the concert type in our churches is disappearing and a nobler and more devotional type of music is being used. Concert music can be heard at the movies or in the hotel dining room and Church choirs are no longer attempting to compete with these agencies. The value of truly devotional choir music to the Order of Worship, is hard to overestimate. Musical responses are very desirable. No choir music has more spiritual value than the softly sung, appropriate response after the minister's prayer or after the Scripture lesson. The congregational singing of responses is more desirable than reading them, because they are more devotional.

Responsive reading is used today in public worship quite generally. Some deplore the tendency to depart from the Psalms and include portions from the Prophecies and Epistles, but it is my conviction that there is real spiritual worth in responsive readings taken from any appropriate part of the Scriptures. The reading of the Scripture lesson, which is sometimes so lifeless, and arouses so little interest, should be made a vital part of worship. The lesson chosen should never be too long. Sometimes if the reading is prefaced by a remark from the minister it lends interest: "This lesson was suggested to me by an experience I had last week," or, "Does the Scripture lesson which I have selected, have any practical value to you?" Some such remark is likely to prepare the congregation to pay attention. Prayer is, by all means, the most important part of public worship. It should lift the people above their ordinary plane to sit with Christ in heavenly places. It should lead them nearer to the throne of Grace than they would go themselves. In order to accomplish this, much attention must be given to the preparation of the prayer. No Presbyterian minister would think of preaching to his congregation Sunday after Sunday, without preparing his sermons, yet he is sometimes content to address God in prayer without making preparation. Prayer should lead up to a climax. It should change the attitude of the worshipper from the mere formal into a deep and abiding religious experience. It is not necessary that the entire five elements of prayer, namely, adoration, thanksgiving, confession, petition and intercession be introduced into each prayer and elaborated. Variety is necessary to hold attention and sometimes only one or two of these elements need be elaborated, while the others are only introduced or even omitted. But the prayer should bring the worshipper into the presence of his Creator, so he can not only send up petitions, but can also receive impression from the throne room. When this is accomplished, each worshipper is aglow with a radiant spiritual experience which tells the minister more forcefully than words can express that there is something there that was not there before, namely, a deeper sense of the presence of God.

XIV

WORKING TOGETHER WITH GOD

WHEN our hearts are warmed through contact with the Heavenly Father in worship, they issue forth in streams of noble service. High duties call us to great endeavour. Our work is indeed strenuous, but our contact with God makes us strong. We meet all sorts of men, but the sense of God as Father, makes us a brother to them all. We want to deal nobly with them and if necessary, sacrifice for them. Labour is no longer drudgery, for we are working together with God. We are helping to usher in the Kingdom of Christ, with its better social order. It makes no difference what may be the nature of the work we are doing, as long as it is a real contribution to the service of God and man, we have a right to put behind it the high and beautiful motive of Christ. We may do our humble task as a part of God's work in the world. Men may ignore it and regard it as insignificant, but after all, the thing that counts is whether or not we are of worth to God. The very genius of the Christian religion is to make men worthy in the sight of God, through Jesus Christ. Its purpose is to take spiritually ignorant men and enlighten them, selfish men and make them love their fellows for Christ's sake. Whatever contributes to that end is working together with God. For nearly two thousand years Christianity has not failed to produce a long succession of noble persons.

Every child is born in a palace with many windows. It is the duty of each parent and teacher to lift up the curtains and open wide the windows, so that every bit of truth and beauty in earth, sea and sky may flow in to enlighten the child's soul. Under the proper conditions, enlightenment is just as contagious as disease. The noble men of the medical profession have done wonders to stamp out disease and make health contagious in this country. When George Washington was inaugurated President of the United States, we are told that half of the faces in the audience were pock-marked. Today there is not a single individual in this assembly whose face is so marked, because the principles of health have gained the ascendancy through the aid of the medical science. In like manner, enlightenment is gaining the ascendancy over ignorance and, in spite of the disappointments and setbacks, Christian civilisation is slowly forging its way to the front, and will ultimately prevail. Evil men can no more prevail against Christian enlightenment, than they can prevail against the north wind and against winter.

The treasures of wisdom and knowledge are arranged upon a series of shelves, one above the other. Every man carries away just what he desires. Barbarous men carry away roots, bark, berries, fish and live in caves. The more civilised climb a little higher and carry minerals, wood, fire, and make the wild beasts bear their burdens. The more ambitious climb still higher and invoke the aid of sails, and steam and throttle the power of the waterfall to grind their grain and lift their loads. Then, occasionally, there comes along a superman, who just stands on tiptoe and brings down the secret of a telephone, an aeroplane or a radio. These are the men of genius. Not otherwise, the fruits of working together with God are arranged upon a series of shelves, and men carry away with them the contents of the lower or the higher shelves in proportion to their faithfulness and perseverance.

It requires ambition and work to plan and execute a way to gain a livelihood for one's self and family and secure one's self against sickness and old age. Whenever a Karl Marx appears preaching the doctrine of socialism and communism, saying, "Have a good time, do not think of sickness and old age, let the state worry," there is always sure to be a great army of followers—drifters, idlers, and indifferent people, who do not have the ambition or inclination to think. Anything that tends to relieve the individual of personal responsibility is a detriment to the individual and to the state. And anything that tends to relieve the individual of moral and spiritual responsibility is also a detriment to the individual and to the Kingdom.

The redemptive work of society in the time of crisis is the work of the enlightened men. The world is just beginning to throw off the terrible results of the nightmare of the awful war. The crippled and the diseased of the war are still to be found in our hospitals. The crime wave that has been sweeping the world is largely the aftermath of the war. But there is a sense in which the very greatness of the tragedy presents a unique opportunity. There is a time when the brittle glass flows like water. Hot, it will receive whatever form the artist desires. But when once allowed to cool, it will forever resist the steel mould. There is a time in the

Spring season, when both the soil and the seed are highly sensitive with life, but the farmer tarries at the peril of starvation. So too, there was a time after the Armistice when the whole world was impressionable. The men who sat around the table at the Peace Conference in France held the destiny of the world in their hands. They had the power to exert a truly worldwide Christian influence, which would have been heard gladly. But when the history of that Conference was written, and the facts were exposed, we find that instead of making the world "safe for democracy," they made the world "safe for hypocrisy." That was one of the blackest hours since Calvary. While humanity was suspended on its cross of suffering, they cast lots on humanity's garments. They gambled on the fruits of the war. They bought, sold and exchanged, until the treatises they produced were pregnant with more bloody wars than history has yet recorded. Now the psychological moment is past and the nations are growing farther and farther apart. Why? Because those who dominated the Peace Conference were not working together with God. May the London Naval parley bear better fruit.

What the world needs at the present time is to press forward toward the principles of Christian brotherhood and goodwill. What America needs today, perhaps more than anything, is parents working together with God in the training of youth in the principles of the Christian religion. Yes, more religious training in the home. An eminent Christian authority said recently: "The Amercan parents are too often the missing link that should bind the child to the throne of God." And again he said, "Parents must exact unanswering obedience from the children in the homes, for the child who will not respect its parents will not respect the laws of the land." Certain New York jurists who have made an investigation of country wide conditions, report that in 1920, three-quarters of a million children were arrested for thieving in the United States. Today that number has been doubled. When asked to explain this they replied: "A generation is now coming to maturity that has received little or no moral instruction." Twenty years ago the parents of this country ceased to emphasise the necessity of children attending Sunday School and Church, and transferred all the emphasis to the six days training in the public schools. Truant officers were hired to arrest all children not in the schoolroom during school sessions. Parents worked together with the authorities to compel their children to go to the public schools, which is perfectly right and quite desirable, because they realise that there is no place in the modern business world for the man or woman who has no education. But when it comes to the Ten Commandments, and the fundamental principles of right and wrong, which are vitally important for the maintenance of the republic, they do not urge their children to master these fundamentals. Why should the parents not be as vitally interested in the moral and spiritual welfare of their children as with the intellectual? Why should they not see to it that the one day that is set aside for soul culture, finds the children in the Sunday School and Church? The situation would not be so appalling if there was universal religious training in the public schools, but there is not, and there is no good reason why there is not.

It is a sad commentary upon the superficiality of the modern intellect, with its frivolity and incapacity for fundamental thinking, that there are those who hold that they need the Lord's Day for recreation, and are too tired to adopt the custom of Christ of worshipping on the Sabbath for the culture of their souls and the souls of their families. There are fifty million native born Americans in this country, and about fifty-three million foreign born. How on earth are the native Americans going to assimilate the foreigners coming to our shores each year? There is only one way. It is by setting the foreigner the example of laying aside all business and cares one day in the week and going to their several places of worship, sincerely and earnestly worshipping God, and seeking his guidance in the affairs of business and state. If all Christians would thus sincerely work together with God, America, with all its alien population would become a veritable paradise in less than a decade.

When flint and steel come together, something is produced which was not found in either. So when men worship in unison, there is an inspiration which does not come in solitary worship. Every public speaker knows that if the audience is small and scattered, the argument does not proceed well. But, if the room is crowded and men sit shoulder to shoulder, the sparks fly from heart to heart, as it were, until all is aflame. One match, if left to itself, soon dies out. But if a great number of twigs and boughs are gathered in advance, then one match may light them and the flames will leap from twig to twig and from bough to bough, and a mighty fire is soon ablaze. Now, that is Christ's way of filling up the gap between Lazarus and Dives. The Gospel is the unifier of the race. The Church is the place where all meet—rich and poor alike—and prepare themselves to work together with God for the common good. It is the place where they learn that one man's burden is every man's burden, and one man's joy is every man's joy. The Church is a school for all classes of society. Men have tried many devices and experiments. Some day they will try Christ's plan. Then discord and hatred will give way to brotherhood and goodwill, and there will be peace.

The profound truth that all men are the sons of God and brothers in Christ, has played a vital part in the life of the world. Uttered at a time when every phase of life contradicted it, this principle became a leaven in politics, in industry and in society. If all men are kings and priests unto God, what then, becomes of the divine right of kings and of the sacerdotal caste? They both were slowly undermined and political and social democracy came into being. If all men are brothers in the one divine family, what then is to be done with human slavery? St. Paul sent the slave, Onesimus back to Philemon. Does he thereby approve of slavery? He undermined slavery by charging his master to recognise in the slave a "brother beloved." In this manner the Christian religion has slowly helped to destroy existing institutions, and to introduce human relations. The process may be slow, but it is sure, for working together with God is not in vain. The religion of Jesus is the religion of fraternity and democracy.

How is this religion to be worked out in the practical organisation of our industrial life? That is the great question before all of us today. One of the most encouraging signs of the times is the fact that so many men are vitally interested in it, and are trying, in various ways, to answer it. Some fruitful experiments are being made and others are being contemplated. Out of these experiments and thoughts certain things are emerging that have the approval of all men: Children shall not be exploited, either by their parents or their employers, but shall be given every opportunity for education and recreation. Our religion demands that child labour be abolished. It is estimated that a million children are still employed in work where they have no right to be.

Women should be protected from the evils of modern industry. There are sound social and economic reasons for this, recognised today by the law and the courts. But our Christian religion recognises every woman as the child of God and the sister to us all. Because of this fact, a nation calling itself Christian must safeguard its girls and women from too long hours, night work, over-fatigue, and the conditions that undermine health and ruin character. The future of the home and the nation are at stake, but what is more important, is the viewpoint of the Great Worker, Who has made the human soul in His own likeness and for fellowship with Him. Again, there is the question of the living wage for men. Under our present system, wages are determined, to some extent at least, by the law of supply and demand; when there are few available workers, as was true during the world war, wages go up; when there are many workers, wages go down. This, of course, presents us with serious problems of unemployment and wages beneath the level of what is necessary for our standard of living. Men in all walks of life are beginning to see that we need not be the victims of such laws any more than we need be the victims of the laws of heat and cold; for, just as we provide against the winter that may freeze us, so can we provide against the period of unemployment that would starve us. A little statesmanship in industry, a little human engineering in social organisation, a little wise legislation, not to mention frugal living and economy by the individual will do wonders. A large manufacturer was told by one of his associates that the business in which they were engaged was not able to pay a living wage. His reply was: "If this business is unable to pay a living wage it has no right to exist." That man is endeavouring to put his religion into his business. It is surely no more difficult to determine what is a living wage, than it is to determne what is a fair profit.

In the human relations of employer and employed the principle of human brotherhood has a great application. In a public statement sometime ago the Chairman of the United States Steel Corporation said, "There seems to be very near harmonious relations between employer and employees." That is as it should be, for business is a great partnership in which some men invest their money and others invest their lives. Too often the money or property is thought to be more important than the life. But human right is ever superior to property right. Both employer and employed are men before they are capitalists or labourers and have the duties of men. Religion requires that first and foremost they must do unto others what they would that others should do unto them. This rules out class hatred and class struggle; it makes for mutual recognition and brotherhood; it finds expression in what we call democracy. A distinguished English lecturer recently said; "Englishmen have not expelled arbitrary power from the throne, in order to see it reestablished in the factory or the mine; nor have they stripped their landed aristocracy of its privileges in order to transfer them to a plutocracy, distinguished neither by birth, nor by culture, but depending, at best, upon economic statesmanship, and at worst, merely on a nose for money. They will deal with the latter as they did with the former." The Christian leaven is at work in the industrial lump, and will eventually lift our relations to the point where we are comrades and partners in the splendid enterprise of the world's work, which is God's work.

The task of applying this principle of the Master to modern industry is the task of everyone. We sometimes fancy that such a work may belong to the men called employers, or it may be to the labour organisations, but that it has nothing to do with us. Women, particularly, are inclined to think that such affairs are entirely outside of their province. But it is not so; it is the task of all. Each, of course, is to put into his own task, whatever it may be, the motive of co-working with the Great Worker. No one can do that for you. It is necessarily your own choice and will. But, outside this individual field, you have the larger duty of which I have been speaking. In that statement of the Chairman of the United States Steel Corporation, Judge Gary is quoted as saying that "capital has reached the point where it expects to be subjected to government supervision." He went on record as saying that he favoured such government supervision, when it would profit the people in general and injure none. That is a significant statement and is in line with that of the Englishman previously quoted, who said, "What we are seeking, amid many inconsistencies and hesitations, is some reconstruction of industry which will, at once, make those who direct it, accountable to the community for their actions and increase the practical freedom of the mass of mankind by increasing their power to control the material conditions on which their livelihood and well-being depends." If this is to be the way out, it follows that every one of us, women as well as men, by virtue of membership in a democratic community, has his task. We do not want a bureaucracy, we want a self-determining community as broad as our common humanity, where all are brothers, all working and none shirking, under the one Father God, in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Yonder, on a dateless Lord's Day, on a lonely island by the violent, euxanthic sea, stands John, the son of Zebedee. He beholds the vision of the Almighty, and the fulfilment falls beyond the sea and the sun. He has now become an old man and is there in that lonely place among murderers and thieves. But God set a new heaven and a new earth in his heart. Stooping over a little spring, the aged apostle's vision enlarged the shining pool, and it became a river of life. Sitting beneath a little shrub that sprang out of the rocky soil, having no fruit, his vision enlarged until it bore fruit every month and its very leaves became medicine for the healing of nations. Surrounded by men of baser sort, his vision outlined for him a realm into which no murderers nor drunkards should come, but where earth's noblest spirits should assemble. Lying in the darkness of his dungeon, where his little candle flickered, he saw the outlines of the city Beautiful, where there was no light, where the sun never rose nor set, where, instead of this feeble candle, God Himself was the light thereof. When one of his fellow martyrs was dead, in his imagination, he heard a voice say, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; that they may rest from their labours and their works do follow them." Then something whispered that God, who had set His new Jerusalem in His servant's heart, was strong enough and good enough to realise it for him. So we shall also find that, while conditions are slowly improving, there is no perfection in this life, but those who are faithful workers together with God, and who have caught the vision of Christ, a Saviour in the soul, look forward to the great beyond with a calm, strong peace possessing their souls, for they are fitted to live here and hereafter, who know God and Jesus Christ, whom He sent.

XV

THE END OF THE TRAIL

EVERY normal person wishes to be strong; to possess strength that literally overflows with radiance of life to those within the circle of his influence. The strong souls in our midst are doing a great and noble work for God. We long to fathom the mystery of their strength, that we may make our lives sublime. A full and satisfactory reply is found in the text, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." Christian joy and Christian strength are inseparable. It is said that a pessimist is a man who blows out his candle to see how dark it is. There are times when we are all guilty of tending in that direction. We allow our religion to become joyless. But there is no room for pessimism in the Christian religion, and anyone who is thoroughly imbued with the principles of Christ cannot be pessimistic. He may not always be perfectly happy, for happiness, as the term implies, comes to us by haphazard or through some outward circumstance of life. But joy, literally means a leap or spring from within. It is the bliss of character and not of condition. The soul is in such complete harmony with the over-Soul of the universe—God—that there is a perpetual wellspring of spiritual bliss. God is its source and Christ is its centre and the light that radiates from within can brighten the darkest night of adversity. To possess this quality is to be strong.

The religion of Jesus Christ is as the song of the lark. It does not sing to a time-table, it sings because it must express its own music, even though its song fall upon the desert air. The religion of Jesus Christ is like a cup of cold water taken from a spring on the mountain side, and not from an indoor fountain whose water has not been changed for weeks in the middle of the summer. The adventure of Interviewing God should make us buoyant; forming His acquaintance through Jesus Christ, and drinking in His atmosphere should make us cheerful; assuming our rightful share of personal responsibility along with our fellow companions, guided by the infallible rule of faith and practise should help us to recognise the great infection of sin and eradicate it through the vicarious friendship of Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us, and has made it possible for us to approach God at any time in His name. God's Fatherly interest in us should make us willing to work together with Him, for the furthering of Christ's Kingdom on earth and the uplift of all men everywhere. In short, the Christian religion, when taken seriously and not half-heartedly, is the greatest boon that has ever come to man. It brings us face to face with a friendly God, Who is a loving and tender Father and Who is interested in our best welfare to the extent that he has sent His Son into the world to redeem us from sin and to aid us in choosing every step of our journey through life. He is not far removed, but His heart is beating in us, if we are obedient to His commandments and every time we think of God we touch Him. This friendly contact with God, as it is practised through the years, develops a beautiful character, which shall go on beyond the limits of physical life into the life eternal, and death becomes a transition rather than a thing to be dreaded or feared.

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